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# Horace Greeley

*Founder and Editor of The New York  
Tribune*

BY

WILLIAM ALEXANDER LINN

Author of "The Story of the  
Mormons"



*Illustrated*



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## PREFACE

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HORACE GREELEY is remembered by the men of his own day as a great editor and a somewhat eccentric genius. While we like to hear about a man's personal characteristics, in studying his biography the lessons of a life like Greeley's are to be found in his works. When a "gawky" country lad, with a limited education and a slight acquaintance with the printer's trade, comes to the principal city of the land with a few dollars in his pocket and a single suit of clothes, and fights a fight the result of which is the founding of the most influential newspaper of his day, and the acquirement of a reputation as its editor which secures for him a nomination for the presidency of the United States—in such a man's career there must be material for useful study. And the place to study Horace Greeley is in his newspapers. He made these newspapers; he gave them their character; and, in doing so, he left on them his mental photograph.

## Horace Greeley

Such a study is most interesting. No other editor has ever given opportunity for it. Beginning his editorial labors when both the tariff and the slavery questions were quiescent, we find in the files of the New Yorker, the Jeffersonian, the Log Cabin, and the New York Tribune, in order, an expression of the growing national interest in these subjects, and a discussion of them which pictures, better than any mere recital of results can do, the building up of a public sentiment that had so far-reaching results. This is especially true of the slavery question; because Greeley was not an early Abolitionist—not an Abolitionist at all, in the technical sense. He was one of those who were content to leave the South alone with its slavery as that institution was defined in the Federal Constitution and restricted by the Missouri Compromise. But he was foremost in the ranks of those who called for the observance of that compromise, who refused to concede to the South new slave territory, and who assisted in arousing the national conscience to the pitch that made an armed attempt to save the Union in the sixties a possibility.

Why this valiant warrior stepped aside into the ranks of the timid and the compromisers when the issue was drawn, each reader

## Preface

may decide for himself. Why he was not content with his position and influence as an editor, and sacrificed a good deal of consistency in an effort to reach the office of President, may also be left to the reader's opinion. His weaknesses throughout his editorial career are almost as marked as his strength, and a lack of foresight often played havoc with his judgment. An editor of large experience said, on the occasion of his death: "The editor of a daily paper is the object of unceasing adulation from a crowd of those who shrink from fighting the slow and doubtful battle of life in the open field, and crave the kindly shelter of editorial plaudits, 'puffs,' and 'mentions'; and he finds this adulation offered freely, and by all classes and conditions, without the least reference to his character or talents or antecedents. What wonder if it turns the heads of unworthy men, and begets in them some of the vices of the despots—their unscrupulousness, their cruelty, and their impudence; what wonder, too, if it should have thrown off his balance a man like Mr. Greeley, whose head was not strong, whose education was imperfect, and whose self-confidence had been fortified by a brave and successful struggle with adversity."

Of Greeley's honesty and purity of motive



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there was never any question. In his days of poverty no suggestions of a Weed that he remain quiet about some matter in which he believed, but which was not on the popular side, had any influence with him. In the days of the slavery contest, when the business interests of his city were ready for almost any concessions to Southern customers, he defied the "priests of the god Cotton," as he called them, and rebuked them in most scathing terms. When the war was over, and the questions of adjustment and reconstruction were to be solved, he took a stand immediately and openly in favor of pardon and renewed brotherhood which cost him the favor of thousands of old associates, and lost him an election to the United States Senate. However much his judgment swayed, it never swayed "on that side fortune leans."

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# HORACE GREELEY

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## CHAPTER I

### HIS EARLY YEARS AND FIRST EMPLOYMENT AS A COMPOSITOR

THE country lad who went to New York city in the summer of 1831 to seek his fortune, arrived in what would now be called a good-sized town. The population of Manhattan Island (below the Harlem River) was only 202,589 in 1830, as compared with the 1,850,093 shown by the census of 1900; the total population of the district now embraced in Greater New York was then only 242,278, while in 1900 it was 3,437,202. The total assessed valuation of the city, real and personal, in 1833, was only \$166,491,542; in 1900 it was, for the Borough of Manhattan, \$2,853,363,382. No railroad then landed passengers or freight in the city, no ocean steamers departed from the docks, and there was no telegraphic communication. Thirteenth Street marked the northern boundary of the settled part of Manhattan Island, and al-

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though, in 1828, lots from two to six miles distant from the City Hall were valued at from only \$60 to \$700 each, more than one writer of the day was ready to concede that, owing to advantages of cheaper land on the opposite shores of Long Island and New Jersey, newcomers were likely to settle there before the city could count on a larger growth. We get an idea of the rural condition of the city in the announcement that the post-office (in Exchange Place) was open only from 9 A. M. to sunset; that the "elegant [dry goods] emporium" of Peabody & Co. occupied a frontage of two windows under the American Hotel, at the northwest corner of Broadway and Barclay Street, the residences of Phillip Hone and another prominent citizen being situated in the same block, and that Greenwich Village had not yet lost its character as a summer resort; and, five years later, the New Yorker, in an article setting forth the growth of the city, said, "Her streets, lacking more direct appliances, have been sun-dried and rain-washed till they are passably, if hardly, respectable."

This was the city on one of whose wharves an Albany boat landed Horace Greeley one summer morning. His equipment for a struggle for a living among entire strangers he

## His Early Years

has thus described: "I was twenty years old the preceding February; tall, slender, pale, and plain; with ten dollars in my pocket, summer clothing worth perhaps as much more, nearly all on my back, and a decent knowledge of so much of the art of printing as a boy will usually learn in the office of a country newspaper."

The Greeleys, for generations back, had not known affluence. Of Scotch-Irish stock, some of them had emigrated to America as early as 1640, and had fought the fight for a living as farmers or as blacksmiths. Horace's father Zaccheus was a farmer, and the future journalist was born on his farm of fifty acres five miles from Amherst, N. H., on February 3, 1811. With the best of management it would have been difficult to obtain from such a farm more than a living for the owner's family. The Greeleys did work hard, the mother sharing with her husband such labor as raking and loading hay, besides doing housework and carding and spinning, and Horace, when five years old, gave such assistance as riding the horse to plow before going to school for the day, and killing wireworms in the corn. But the father was an easy-going rather than an energetic man. In those days whisky, rum, and cider were



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served even at the ordination of clergymen in parts of New England, and Zaccheus Greeley was never behind his neighbors in acts of hospitality. He was, his son has testified, "a bad manager," and always in debt, and his farm did not enable him to gain on his indebtedness. In the hope of improving matters, he let his own farm to a younger brother and rented a larger one near by. But the brother could not meet his engagements, and the family moved back in 1819. Sickness ensued, a speculation in lumber proved disastrous, and the end came in the summer of 1820, when the home farm was seized by the sheriff at the instance of several creditors, the father took his departure to escape arrest for debt, and the farm and crops, when sold, left nothing for the wife and children. "When night fell," wrote the son in later years, "we were as bankrupt a family as well could be." Horace then had a brother, eight years old, and two sisters of six and four years; another sister was born in 1822.

In the following January the Greeleys, with their effects packed in a two-horse sleigh, joined the father in Westhaven, Vt., where he had hired a house at a rental of \$16 a year. There for two years the elder Greeley worked by the day at such jobs as he could secure,



Horace Greeley's birthplace.



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the largest of these being the clearing of a fifty-acre tract of land. The two boys attended school in the winter months, but assisted their father in his laborious tasks the rest of the time. Cutting down trees was not the work for which boys of eight and ten were fitted; but they did what they could at that, and carried off the brush and drove the team. In the early spring they chopped away, standing in slush knee-deep, and in summer they endured at night the torture of having the lances of thistles dug out of their festered feet which they could not afford to protect with shoes. Seven dollars an acre, and half the wood, was to have been the recompense for this labor; but before the account was adjusted their employer died, and a part of even this small emolument they never received. Next, the father, again with the sons' assistance, tried farming and running a sawmill on shares at the same time, and later he united land-clearing and farming—all without financial success. This was the last of Horace Greeley's farm work as a boy. He had found in it "neither scope for expanding faculties, incitement to constant growth in knowledge, nor a spur to generous ambition." But he believed in farming on business principles, and it was his experience in these early years

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which led him, when in command of a great newspaper, to devote so much thought to a higher agriculture, and to write and speak so many words in behalf of intelligent land culture.

Any one who visits the neighborhood where the early days of a man afterward famous have been spent will not fail to discover reminiscences of his youthful talent, and to unearth venerable predictions of his future greatness. This has been the case with Horace Greeley, producing a kind of biography which he himself pronounced "monstrously exaggerated by gossip and tradition." In his early years he was very delicate, and the death of two children who had preceded him made his mother especially tender of him. She had a rare store of old-country traditions told to her by her Irish grandmother, and the child took an eager interest in these; and an open book on his mother's knees while she spun so attracted him that when he was four years old he could read, and, from the manner of taking his lessons, it became indifferent to him whether the book was held sideways or even upside down. Before he was quite three years old he was sent to the district school from the house of his grandfather, which was nearer it than his home, and this school he

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attended most of the winter, and some of the summer, months during the next three years. He also attended the district school while they lived in Vermont, as circumstances permitted. The text-books in those days were as primitive as the teaching and the discipline, embracing Webster's Spelling-Book (just introduced), The American Preceptor as a reader, and Bingam's Ladies' Accidence as a grammar. Reviewing his school days, in his Recollections of a Busy Life, Greeley said: "I deeply regret that such homely sciences as chemistry, geology, and botany were never taught. Yet I am thankful that algebra had not yet been thrust into our rural common schools, to knot the brains and squander the time of those who should have been learning something of positive and practical utility."

Horace was certainly a precocious child. He had read the Bible through, under his mother's guidance, when he was five years old. When he was four years old he was so good a speller that, in the weekly matches at school, in which sides were chosen, he would easily secure and retain the head of his side, but was so much a child that the "choosing" of the spellers had to be committed to some one else, because he always selected for his

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side the playmates whom he liked best, without regard to their spelling ability. All his schoolfellows testified in later years to his early love of books, and that not one of the few volumes which the neighborhood afforded escaped him, and they recalled also his interest in the weekly newspaper for which his father subscribed. The first book that Greeley owned was *The Columbian Orator*, given to him by an uncle when, five years old, he lay sick with the measles. At Westhaven, Vt., the Greeleys lived near the house of the landowner who gave them employment, and he allowed Horace access to his library; and thus, by the time the boy was fourteen years old, he had read the *Arabian Nights*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Shakespeare*, and some history.

During the family's last year's residence in New Hampshire Horace's repute as a student induced a man of means to offer to send the lad, at his own expense, to Phillips Academy at Exeter, and afterward to college. Some men, after going through such struggles as Greeley encountered, would have regretted in later years the loss of this opportunity. Greeley did not. On the contrary, he expressed his thanks that his parents did not let him be indebted to any one of whom he had not a right to expect such a favor, and

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he was ever hostile to the education furnished by the colleges of the day. To a young man who wrote to him in 1852 for his advice about going to college, Greeley replied, "I think you might better be learning to fiddle," and in his *Busy Life* (1868) he said he would reply to the question, "How shall I obtain an education," by saying, "Learn a trade of a good master. I hold firmly that most boys may better acquire the knowledge they need than by spending four years in college." In an address at the laying of the corner-stone of the People's College at Havana, N. Y., in 1858, he explained, however, that he did not denounce a classical course of study, but only "protested against the requirement of application to and proficiency in the dead languages of *all* college students, regardless of the length of time they may be able to devote to study, and of the course of life they meditate." The founding of agricultural and technical colleges, the opening of scientific departments in our classical institutions, and the device of optional courses are all concessions to the idea for which Greeley then contended.

A lad disgusted with the hard labor and slight remuneration of farming and land-clearing, and with a decided literary taste, naturally looked, in those days, to the print-



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er's trade as a congenial occupation. Newspapers Greeley had "loved and devoured" from the time when he had learned to read, and when he was eleven years old he induced his father to accompany him to a newspaper office in Whitehall, N. Y., where he had heard that there was an opening for an apprentice. But he was rejected as too young for the place. By the spring of 1826 his father had given up the fight for a living in New England, and decided to carry out a project he had long had in mind—a move to Western Pennsylvania. He bought a tract of four acres in Erie County, about three miles from Clymer, N. Y., on which was a log cabin with a leaky roof, in a wilderness, where the woods abounded with wild animals, and the forest growth was so heavy that he and his younger son were a month in clearing an acre. By additional purchases he in time increased his holding to some three hundred acres. The life of the family there was a discouraging one, and Horace says he never saw the old smile on his mother's face from the day she entered that log cabin to the day of her death in 1855.

That spring, before the family moved, Horace saw an advertisement, stating that an apprentice was wanted in the office of the Northern Spectator at East Poultney, Vt.,

## His Early Years

and he at once applied for the place. In all his early applications for work his personal appearance was an obstacle to his success. His figure was tall and slender, and his head large and covered with a growth of yellowish, tow-colored hair, so light that it seemed almost white with age. "Gawky" would describe his general aspect. His carelessness about dress, which was a personal characteristic in after-life, and which he was sometimes accused of cultivating with a view to effect,<sup>1</sup> began with his boyhood, partly be-

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<sup>1</sup> In his controversy with Cooper, the novelist, over the latter's libel suits, in the early days of the Tribune, Greeley printed a report of an imaginary argument by Cooper in court, in which he made Cooper thus allude to his appearance: "Fenimore—'Well, then, your Honor, I offer to prove by this witness that the plaintiff is tow-headed, and half bald at that; he is long-legged, gaunt, and most cadaverous of visage—*ergo*, homely. . . . I have evidence to prove the said plaintiff slouching in dress; goes bent like a hoop, and so rocking in gait that he walks on both sides of the street at once.'"

When, in 1844, Colonel James Watson Webb, in the Courier and Enquirer, accused Greeley of seeking notoriety by his oddity in dress, the Tribune retorted that its editor had been dressed better than any of his assailants could be if they paid their debts, adding "that he ever affected eccentricity is most untrue; and certainly no costume he ever appeared in would create such a sensation on Broadway as that which James Watson Webb would have worn but for the clemency of Governor Seward"—an allusion to Webb's sentence for fighting a duel.

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cause he had no money with which to buy good clothes, and partly because he was indifferent in the matter. A tattered hat, a shirt and trousers of homespun material, and the coarsest of shoes, without stockings, sufficed for his summer costume, and when, on his arrival in New York city, he added a linen roundabout, his appearance was so amusing that the boys jeered at him on the streets.

The business manager of the Northern Spectator, when Horace asked him, "Do you want a boy to learn the trade?" thought it strange that so unpromising a subject should have conceived the idea of becoming a printer. But he found the lad intelligent, and was told by him that he "had read some," and that he understood what he had read; so he sent him to the foreman. The latter also changed a first unfavorable impression to the opinion that they should give him a trial, and he was engaged. A few days later, he appeared at the office with his father, his worldly possessions tied up in a handkerchief, and entered into a verbal agreement to work for the concern until he was twenty-one years old, receiving only his board for the first six months, and after that \$40 a year in addition. This compensation was somewhat increased before he left Poultney, and out of his slender means,

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as afterward in New York, he always found some surplus to send to the struggling family in the Pennsylvania wilderness. It is interesting here to note that from the town of Poultney, Vt., came George Jones, who gave Henry J. Raymond his chief financial assistance in founding the New York Times, and long survived both Greeley and Raymond as controlling owner of the Times.

Horace's experience in East Poultney was of the greatest educational value to him. There he first had access to a public library. He soon joined a debating club, of which the leading citizens of the town were members, and, without changing his working clothes or attempting oratory, he won a reputation as a cogent reasoner, and a speaker who was always sure of his facts. As there were only two or three workmen employed in the office, he had experience, not only in setting type, but in blistering his hands and laming his back assisting in running off the edition on an old-fashioned hand-press. His opportunity went further than this. Writing "compositions" had not been one of the requirements of the schools he had attended; but the editor of the Northern Spectator was a Baptist clergyman, whose religious duties took up a good deal of his time, and the apprentice,

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when his taste for reading and his ability in debate became known, was entrusted with the selection of some of the miscellany for the paper, the condensation of news, and the preparation of occasional original paragraphs, which were often set up in type by him without first reducing them to manuscript form.

This was that kind of practical education for which Greeley always contended, and it was excellent fundamental instruction for the future editor of a city daily. The place for a young man to begin in journalism is at the bottom—as a reporter, if he is employed on a daily newspaper, or a condenser and gleaner if news is not the leading feature of the journal he is helping to make. While Horace Greeley achieved his chief fame as a writer—a debater of principles—it would be a mistake not to recognize the fact that he was a good “all-around” newspaper man. His first journalistic attempts in New York city, as we shall see, illustrated this; his reports of legislative and congressional proceedings and other matters demonstrated his skill as a reporter, and his close supervision of all the columns of the Tribune was made plain in the correspondence with his managing editor, Charles A. Dana, published

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after his death. He always felt a responsibility for the kind of journal that he gave to his subscribers. "I think that newspaper reading is worth all the schools in the country," he told a committee of the House of Commons, of which Cobden was a member, when invited, in London in 1851, to give his views on "taxes on knowledge," and he was too honest to offer his readers anything less than the best that he could supply. Some advice to a country editor, written by him in 1860, could hardly be improved upon. His first principle laid down was that "the subject of deepest interest to an average human being is himself; next to that, he is most concerned about his neighbor." He therefore told his correspondent that, if he would make up at least half his paper of local news, secured by "a wide-awake, judicious correspondent in every village and township in your county, nobody in the county can long do without it. Make your paper a perfect mirror of everything done in your county *that its citizens ought to know.*" This covers the whole ground of breadth and restriction. Next, he would have the editor take an active part in promoting all "home industries," in which he included local fairs and new business enterprises of all kinds. Thirdly, and

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lastly, he says: "Don't let the politicians and aspirants of the county own you. . . . Remember that—in addition to the radical righteousness of the thing—the taxpayers take many more papers than the tax consumers." The following of this advice would have made a success of many a journalistic experiment that has proved a failure.

Greeley's interest in politics began with his early interest in newspapers, and he confesses that he was an "ardent politician" when he was not half old enough to vote. His newspaper apprenticeship gave him his first opportunity to share in political discussion, and aid in the work of a campaign. John Quincy Adams was President, Calhoun Vice-President, and Henry Clay Secretary of State when Greeley went to East Poultney, and public feeling was seething over the charge that there had been a corrupt bargain between Adams and Clay. In the national election of 1828 Calhoun was the candidate for Vice-President on the Jackson (Democratic) ticket, and Adams and Rush headed the National Republican ticket. "We Vermonters were all protectionists," wrote Greeley; the Northern Spectator was an Adams paper of the partizan type, and on election day Poultney gave Adams 334 votes and

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Jackson only 4. Greeley was also greatly interested in the Antimasonry political movement, sympathizing with the opponents of the secret order, and maintaining his opposition to such organizations throughout his life.

Diligent student as he was, Horace was not averse to amusements in those days. In his school and farming life, fishing was his favorite recreation, and in picturing an ideal rest, in his *Busy Life*, he suggested a party of congenial friends, camped on some coast islet or Adirondack lake, where fish or game could be had. He sometimes, when at Poultney, joined a party of bee-hunters, and occasionally took part in a game of ball, but acknowledged his inability "to catch a flying ball, propelled by a muscular arm straight at my nose." He in later years objected to baseball matches between clubs of distant cities, and advocated giving the prize to the club that made the lowest score, as this demonstrated that these players attended better than their opponents to their business duties. Old acquaintances in Poultney said that he was fond of whist, checkers, and chess, and told of his defeating a locally famous checker player; but such games did not win his admiration, and he afterward advised persons



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of sedentary habits to shun them "because of their inevitable tendency to impair digestion and incite headache." He never witnessed a game of billiards, but he recommends bowling as an indoor exercise.

Two rules of life Greeley had already formed when he reached New York—he was a non-user of intoxicants and tobacco. Neither of his parents, he says, was a total abstainer from the use of liquor, and both loved their pipe. But the son was made sick by smoking a half-burned cigar in his grandfather's house when not more than five years old, and from that time he looked on the use of tobacco in any form as "if not the most pernicious, certainly the vilest, most detestable abuse of his corrupt sensual appetites whereof depraved man is capable."

On January 1, 1824, young Greeley "deliberately resolved to drink no more distilled liquors," and he kept this pledge thus made to himself when only thirteen years old, in a community where strong drink was as free as water, and nine years before the American Temperance Society declared for total abstinence. Soon after he went to Poultney he assisted in organizing a temperance society, and, to make sure that his own years would not bar him from membership, he had a

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resolution adopted that members be received "when they were old enough to drink."

The Northern Spectator was not a financial success. It struggled on, however, under different ownerships, until June, 1830, when its publication was discontinued and the office was closed. Greeley left the town with enlarged information on many subjects, including writing and speaking and the duties of newspaper editing. In the way of capital he had only \$20 in cash and perhaps a few more clothes than he came into the town with. He went at once, part of the way on foot, to his parents' home, made a visit there of a few weeks, and then set out to seek work at his trade. He found employment at Jamestown and Gowanda, N. Y., and later began an engagement that lasted for seven months in the office of the Erie (Penn.) Gazette. Wherever he applied his personal appearance was still against him. The proprietor of the Gazette used to relate that when he entered the office and saw Greeley (who was waiting for him) reading some of the exchange newspapers, his first feeling was one of astonishment that a fellow so singularly "green" in his appearance should be reading anything.

When the Gazette office no longer offered him employment, he tried to secure work in

## Horace Greeley

some of the neighboring towns, and, when this effort failed, made up his mind to look for a position in New York city. Accordingly, he again visited his parents, divided with them his cash, retaining only \$25 for his own use, and with \$10 of this sum, and his scanty wardrobe, he stepped from an Albany boat to a pier near Whitehall Street early on the morning of Friday, August 18, 1831.

## CHAPTER II

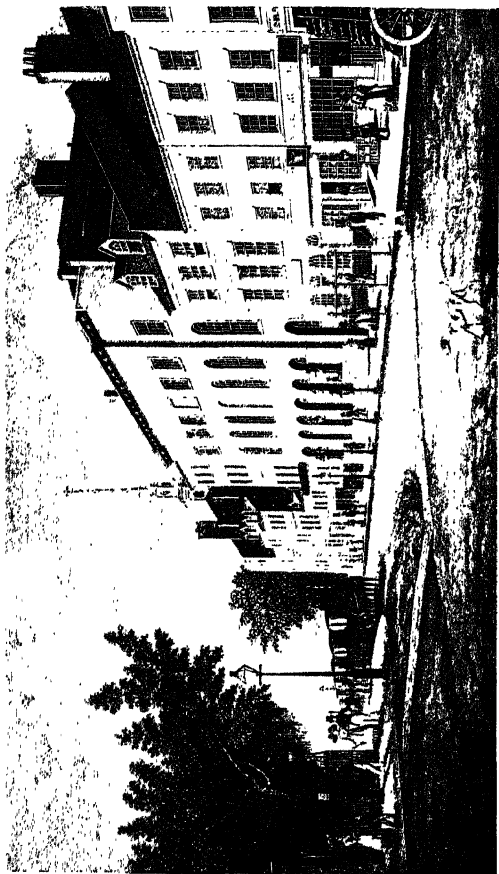
### FIRST EXPERIENCES IN NEW YORK CITY—THE NEW YORKER

GREELEY soon satisfied himself with a stopping place, engaging a room and board for \$2.50 a week with Edward McGolrick, who kept a grog-shop and boarding-house combined—a quiet, decent one—at No. 168 West Street; and after breakfast he started out to look for work. He was as persistent in this, in the face of discouragement, as he was in every duty. For two days he tramped the streets, visiting two-thirds of the printing-offices in the city, always receiving a “No” to his question, “Do you want a hand?” and incurring the accusation in one office of being a runaway apprentice. When Saturday night came he had satisfied himself that the city afforded him no hope of a living, and had decided to start for the country again on Monday, before his last dollar was spent.

But this was not to be. Some young acquaintances of his landlord, who called on

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Sunday, told him of an office at No. 85 Chatham Street, where a compositor was wanted, and there Greeley betook himself on Monday morning so early that the place was closed when he arrived. So uncouth was the lad's appearance that here again he would probably have been rejected had any one been at hand to undertake the work that was to be done. This was the putting in type of a small New Testament, with narrow columns, the text interspersed with references to notes marked by Greek and other letters. So complicated was this task, and so little could a man earn at it, paid by the ems set, that several compositors had abandoned it after a brief trial. This job the foreman offered to the country lad, confident that a half day would prove his incompetence to perform it. When the proprietor came in and saw Greeley at work, he inquired, "Did you hire that d—d fool?" adding, "For God's sake, pay him off to-night." But the foreman did not pay him off. The one thing this New Englander, who had cleared land standing knee-deep in slush in the spring, and barefooted on thistles in summer, was not afraid of was hard work; the one thing he must have was an income sufficient to keep him alive. He set that Testament. When the foreman ex-



Park Row in 1880.



## First Experiences in New York

amined his first proof, he found that the "d—d fool" had set more type and in better shape than any one else who had attempted it.

For two or three weeks the boy scarcely made his board, although he moved his quarters to a mechanics' boarding place near the office, and worked all the hours that were not given to his meals and to sleep; but he gained in rapidity, and finally made \$5 or \$6 a week by working from twelve to fourteen hours a day, his "case" lighted at night by a candle stuck in a bottle. Naturally, the boys in the office played tricks on so promising a subject, but he took these without resentment, and the annoyance soon stopped, his good nature winning him friends. He was, even in that early year, a lender of money to his fellow-workmen, while he was denying himself everything outside of the bare necessities of life. The New Testament finished, he was out of work for a time, and was then assigned to a "lean" job on a commentary on the Book of Genesis. Then came further tramping, and a discharge from one newspaper office, tradition says, because he was not "decent looking," until he became so nearly discouraged that he seriously thought of trying some other form of employment. The



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idea of seeking work at the national capital occurred to him, but while he had employment he had treated himself to a suit of clothes—a second-hand suit of black, bought of a Chatham Street dealer, in which, he says, he found “no wear and little warmth”—and this had so depleted his capital that he had not money enough to pay his way to Washington. In the following January, however, he found work in the office of the *Spirit of the Times*, which had just been started by W. T. Porter and James Howe, two newcomers from the country, with scant capital. This enterprise was a discouraging one from the start, but, while Greeley found it difficult to collect his wages, he also found opportunity to show his skill in writing articles for the paper, thus keeping in practise what he had learned in Vermont. Later in the year he secured employment in the office of J. S. Redfield, afterward a prominent publisher, and remained there until he was induced to join a fellow printer in setting up a printing establishment of their own. That experiment came about in this way:

Francis Story, the foreman of the *Spirit of the Times* composing-room, numbered among his acquaintances S. J. Sylvester, a leading seller of lottery tickets, and Dr. H. D.

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Shepard, a medical student, who had about \$1,500 in cash at command. Through Sylvester, Story counted on being able to secure the printing of the weekly Bank-Note Reporter, and for Shepard he had in view the printing of a one-cent daily newspaper, which Shepard had decided to establish. With this business in sight, Story proposed to Greeley that they open a printing-office of their own, and, not without misgivings, Greeley finally consented. Between them they could count up less than \$200; but they secured \$40 worth of type on six months' credit, hired two rooms at No. 54 Liberty Street, and invested all their cash in the necessary equipment. Thence, on January 31, 1833, Dr. Shepard's Morning Post was issued. Finding no encouragement for his one-cent scheme, he had fixed the price from the start at two cents; but as cheapness was to be the one quality that would induce people to buy a paper of which Greeley says, "it had no editors, no reporters worth naming, no correspondents, and no exchanges even," it was a certain failure, and it died when two weeks and a half old. The one-cent Sun came nine months later, and came to stay.

The firm of Greeley & Story lost about \$50 through Dr. Shepard, but this did not

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bankrupt them. A purchaser was found for some of the Morning Post's equipment, the Bank-Note Reporter gave them a little income, and they secured the printing of a tri-weekly paper called the Constitutionalist, whose local habitation was in Delaware, and which was the organ of the lottery interest. Lottery-ticket selling was a reputable business in those days, and Greeley not only printed the dealers' organ, but was a contributor to it, one of his articles being a defense of lotteries when an outcry arose against them because of the suicide of a young man who had lost all his property in tickets. When his assistance was not required in his own shop, Greeley would work as a substitute compositor in a newspaper office near by, and he was making fair if slow progress in the world, when, in July, 1833, Story was drowned while bathing in the East River. His place in the firm was taken by Jonas Winchester, and the business continued so prosperously that in 1834 Greeley had the courage to think seriously of starting a newspaper of which he should be the editor. That he had made something of a mark in the local newspaper world is shown by the fact that he was at this time invited by James Gordon Bennett to become interested with him in





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starting a daily paper to be called the New York Herald. This offer was declined, but the idea of a paper of his own was carried out, and on March 22, 1834, appeared the first number of the weekly known as the New Yorker. Greeley was its editor; his partner confining himself to the business of the job-office.

The people of this country early manifested a demand for newspapers, and, as settlements were pushed farther West, a local paper would spring up, sometimes before the stumps were removed from the new clearing. A usual plan was for a printer to issue a prospectus and ask for subscribers. If he secured sufficient encouragement, he might act as his own editor, or, more probably (as was the case with the Northern Spectator), engage some person of a literary bent to devote a part of his time to the editorial room. De Tocqueville, in 1835, wrote: "The number of periodicals and occasional publications which appear in the United States actually surpasses belief. There is scarcely a hamlet which has not its own newspaper."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The number of newspapers and periodicals in the United States in 1828 was estimated at 863, with an annual issue of over 68,000,000, while the census of 1840 showed 1,403, with a yearly issue of 195,838,073 copies. New York State reported 161 in 1828, and 245 in 1840.

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But he found that, "the most distinguished classes of society are rarely led to engage in these undertakings"; and that "the journalists of the United States are usually placed in a very humble position, with a scanty education and a vulgar turn of mind." When John (afterward Lord) Campbell eked out his income in London, in the first years of the nineteenth century, by reporting parliamentary debates, the calling was so discreditable that he concealed his avocation from his fellow law students. Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes let it be understood that it would have hurt him professionally had it been known that he was a "literary man" when he began writing.

Of the literary taste of New York city in 1828, a writer in the *Picture of New York* said: "Most of the periodical works attempted in this city have proved abortive in a few years. The population is so nearly commercial that the largest portion of the public attention is monopolized by the newspapers of the day." Whether Greeley had gaged the literary taste of New York by this measure and hoped to improve it, we do not know. He never exhibited long-headedness in business matters, and may have been guided by an ambition to edit a creditable literary jour-

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nal rather than by any careful estimate of its possible financial success.

Greeley planned to combine in his New Yorker "literature, politics, statistics, and general intelligence." His success in making a good paper of his initial venture was a sufficient proof of his editorial ability. What the New Yorker was he made it almost unaided. In his farewell address to his subscribers, in 1841, when the paper was merged with the Weekly Tribune, he said: "The editorial charge of the New Yorker has from the first devolved on him who now addresses its readers. At times he has been aided in the literary department by gentlemen of decided talent and eminence [including Park Benjamin,<sup>1</sup> C. H. Hoffman, and R. W. Griswold]; at others the entire conduct has rested with him." A glance at the file of this journal will show what a capacity for work its

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<sup>1</sup> Henry J. Raymond, in a letter to R. W. Griswold, from Burlington, Vt., October 31, 1839, said: "I am sorry Benjamin has left the New Yorker. If he had exerted himself but a little he could have made that infinitely the best weekly in the United States. Who will Greeley associate with him? I hope (but do not expect) that he will get one to *fill* B.'s place. The Sentinel here a few weeks since undertook to use up Benjamin instantler on account of his critique of Irving. I gave it a decent rap for it in the Free Press, and since that they have let B. alone and gone to pommeling me."



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editor had.<sup>1</sup> Beginning as a folio, it was published in both folio and quarto form after March, 1836, the folio being issued on Saturday mornings and the quarto (of sixteen pages) on Saturday afternoons. Taking as

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<sup>1</sup> Greeley's idea of what a man should do in the way of newspaper work in those days was thus set forth in a letter to B. F. Randolph, dated May 2, 1836: "I want the whole concern, printing-office included, to belong to you and I, and to be entirely managed between us. I want you to take command at the publication office, and, in a short time, reduce the whole business to a system. Thus far our business department has been but half attended to, and the consequence is that we have lost a great deal by bad agents, runaway subscribers, etc. To remedy this it requires a man steadily at the publication office who not only knows what business is, but feels a deep interest in the prosperity of the concern. It needs some one who knows every agent and the state of his account familiarly, and who can almost repeat the names of the subscribers from memory. To do this he must make all the entries in the books himself and keep the accounts; but as the new subscribers will not probably exceed 100 per week, the discontinuances 25 or 30, and the changes as many more, I believe all the business, including the making out of the bills (excepting, of course, the writing of mails, which is done by a clerk), might well be done by a thorough appropriation of five hours per day—at least after one had become practically familiar with it. As I should still have to do a share of the outdoor business, besides taking entire charge of the printing-office, I should expect you to assist me in the editorial management—at first in the easier portion of it, such as examining exchange papers, and taking entire charge of the city and domestic news; afterward, as experience in these departments and system in the other would allow you more time to do so, in the more especially literary department of the paper."

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a fair example the quarto of March 26, 1836, we find, first, eight pages devoted to original and selected poems; the first of a series of Letters of a Monomaniac; a description of a visit to the King of Greece, and prose selections from home and foreign sources; then come two pages of editorial and political matter; a little over a page devoted to a report of the proceedings of Congress; reviews of new books; the latest foreign and domestic news (particular attention being given to the politics of the different States), and the last page occupied with the words and music of Meet Me by Moonlight, "written and composed by J. Augustin Wade, Esq." The space given to the proceedings of Congress, to State politics, and to tabulated election returns gave every indication of the political bent of the editor, and his appreciation of the value of news was shown by the frequent additions of "postscripts" to the folio edition, giving intelligence received by the mails after the first edition had gone to press. In later years the literary pages contained original stories—Dickens's Barnaby Rudge being printed as a serial (appearing also in the Tribune)—and increased space was devoted to book reviews. In an article contesting an argument that the best British writers of the

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day were superior to the best American writers, the editor thus expressed his opinion of Disraeli:

“Himself an open libertine in life, we regard his works as among the most monstrously absurd, and at the same time abominably pernicious, of the distorted and depraved pictures of fashionable description in European high life that we ever unsuccessfully attempted to endure to the end.”

Greeley contributed to the New Yorker and to other periodicals of the day a number of poems over his initials. They were of varied merit, some of them showing quite as much of the poetic “fire” as do current poetical contributions of our own day. A single quotation—the last of some verses On the Death of William Wirt—must suffice:

Then take thy long repose  
Beneath the shelter of the deep green sod ;  
Death but a brighter halo o’er thee throws—  
Thy fame, thy soul alike have spurned the clod—  
Rest thee in God.

But Greeley never considered himself a poet, and when, in 1869, Robert Bonner proposed to print a volume of poems not to be found in Dana’s Household Handbook of Poetry, Greeley sent him a letter saying: “Be good enough—you *must*—to exclude *me*

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from your new poetic Pantheon. I have no business therein—no right and no desire to be installed there. I am no poet, never was (in expression), and never shall be.”

The reader of to-day, who had only a file of the New Yorker for his literary entertainment, would find it both interesting and instructive. The editorial articles discussed a wide range of subjects with clearness and precision, and an exacting editor of a modern metropolitan journal would find in their form little that would call for revision. The editor had those prime qualifications for success in his calling—ideas to express and the power of expressing them. His views might at times be erratic and provoke much dissent, but this did not mean that he would not command an audience. As illustrations of the scope of his discussion it may be mentioned that he vigorously attacked the franking abuse; opposed all labor combinations, either of masters or journeymen, to regulate compensation, except the establishment of a uniform scale of wages, to be followed in the absence of an agreement to the contrary; expressed a wish for the independence of Texas, but opposed its annexation as likely to cause foreign complications, and because “our territory is ample”; objected to the expenditure of the

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Treasury surplus (in 1836) on armaments and fortifications, believing that a railroad from Portland to New Orleans would serve the better purpose of assisting in the concentration of "the true safeguard against invasion—the muskets of our citizen soldiers"; proposed the formation of associations in the city to enforce the law against houses of ill-fame; and, when rents were advanced downtown, urged the building of railroads from the Exchange, the park, and the Battery to the Harlem River, in order to make the upper part of the island accessible; opposed the forcible removal of the Creeks and Cherokees from their homes in the southern Atlantic States; and, while maintaining that the United States Government was right in its claim regarding the northeastern boundary, deprecated war and proposed arbitration.

Greeley's view of "clean" journalism was well set forth in an article in April, 1841, in which he condemned the spreading of details of crime before newspaper readers, saying: "We weigh well our words when we say that the moral guilt incurred, and the violent hurt inflicted upon social order and individual happiness by those who have thus spread out the loathsome details of this most damn-

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ing deed [a murder] are tenfold greater than those of the miscreant himself." He was an opponent of the spoils system, characterizing political removals (in 1837) as "calculated to corrupt and demoralize the public sentiment."

The two great questions with which Greeley's name was afterward so intimately associated—the tariff and slavery—were attracting little attention during the first years of the New Yorker, and their treatment by him at that time will be shown in later chapters. The great subject of public interest was the finances, State and national. The proposition to establish a United States Bank, the removal of the Federal deposits, the distribution of the public funds among the States, Harrison's defeat by Van Buren, the expansion of the paper currency by the issues of the many new banks throughout the country, and the panic of 1837, all came within the scope of the New Yorker's editorials. In New York State, before the year 1838, bank charters were granted only as the Legislature thought fit. "Accustomed as we are to the spoils system of to-day," says Horace White, "it sounds oddly to read that bank charters were granted by Whig and Democratic Legislatures only to their own partizans.

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Not only was this the common practise, but shares in banks, or the right to subscribe to them, were parceled out to political 'bosses' in the several counties." There was opposition to all banks in the agricultural counties, and the laboring classes were generally hostile to paper money.<sup>1</sup> The New Yorker fought steadily for free banking and for a redeemable paper currency. It expressed a hope that the agriculturist would be found "firmly united in spurning an unnatural and ruinous alliance with the mustering legions of agrarianism," and it combated the theory that money should be made only of the precious metals. Under the free banking system that it favored no persons were to be allowed to issue notes "in excess of their actual capital (or, better, only to equal three-quarters of this capital), in specie, or property readily

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<sup>1</sup> A meeting in the City Hall Park, in March, 1837, called to consider the high prices of the necessities of life, adopted a report which said: "There is another great cause of high prices, so monstrous in its nature that we could hardly credit its existence were it not continually before us—we mean the curse of Paper Money. Gold and silver are produced from the earth by labor; they are, or ought to be, earned from the producer by labor. No man nor combination can by Christian means collect a sufficiency of these metals to enable him to engross the food, fuel, or houses of a nation; but a leagued band of paper-promise coiners exert absolute control over the whole wealth of the country."—(New Yorker, March 18, 1837.)

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convertible into specie." Some of its financial recommendations were novel. Thus, in 1836, it suggested that each railroad, canal, and similar corporation be empowered to issue notes to the amount of two-thirds the value of its completed enterprise, "these notes to constitute a special lien on the work itself, taking precedence of all other claims."

At the time of the suspension of payments by the New York city banks, in 1837, the New Yorker defended them warmly, charging the troubles to the Northwest, and on the day of the suspension it offered three-per-cent premium "on every New York city bill mailed to our address before the first of June." Considering the editor's financial status at that time, this was a good deal like Daniel Webster's offer to pay the national debt. In February, 1838, as a means of obviating the necessity of both a National Bank and State banks, the New Yorker proposed the issue of \$100,000,000 in Treasury notes, by the Federal Government, bearing one-per-cent interest, receivable for all dues, and redeemable "in public lands at cash prices." The Sub-treasury scheme it constantly opposed. From these excerpts it is evident that the possession of "views" on public questions and boldness in advocating them were an



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early, as well as a late, characteristic of Horace Greeley.

Beginning with less than a dozen subscribers, the New Yorker gained steadily in circulation at the rate of about one hundred a week, until, in 1836, its subscribers numbered 7,500. Unfortunately, many of these readers did not pay for their subscriptions. The paper had agents all over the country (a list of them fills two columns of one number) who sent in the names of subscribers, but in many cases did not accompany these names with the cash. Greeley lived with the utmost frugality—the life of a miser, as he once expressed it to Thurlow Weed—and for two years was obliged to look to his job-office for his income. Then, the paper having a fair prospect, he gave over the job-office entirely to his partner, and took the charge of the paper on himself. In 1836, when he was married, he thought that he was worth \$5,000, and that he could safely count on an income of \$1,000 a year. But the panic of 1837 came, and his books began to show a weekly loss of \$100. He had given notes for his white paper, and he had used up some three thousand subscriptions paid in advance. Earnest appeals to the delinquents appeared in the paper: “Friends of the New

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Yorker! Patrons! We appeal to you, not for charity, but for justice. Whoever among you is in our debt, no matter how small the sum, is guilty of a moral wrong in withholding the payment. We bitterly need it. We have a right to expect it." Greeley had a horror of debt, but he felt that he must keep up the struggle. One loan of \$500 saved him from bankruptcy, and he would sometimes pay \$5 for the use of \$500 over Sunday.<sup>1</sup> "If any one would have taken my business and my debts off my hands, upon my giving him my note for \$2,000, I would have jumped at the chance," he said in later years, "and tried to work out the debt by typesetting, if nothing better offered."

Something better offered.

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<sup>1</sup> Greeley wrote to a friend on July 29, 1835: "I paid off everybody to-night, had \$10 left, and have \$350 to raise on Monday. Borrowing places all sucked dry. I shall raise it, however."

## CHAPTER III

### THURLOW WEED'S DISCOVERY—THE JEFFERSONIAN AND THE LOG CABIN

UP in Albany another man who was at that time editing a newspaper had a fight on his hands, not so desperately against overdue notes as against a most powerful political opposition. That man was Thurlow Weed, and his opposition, known as "The Albany Regency," included such leaders as Martin Van Buren, William L. Marcy, and Silas Wright. Weed had founded the Albany Evening Journal in March, 1830, and for several years had not only written all its editorial articles, but had reported the legislative proceedings, selected the miscellany, collected the local news, read the proofs, and sometimes made up the forms for the press. His fight in the first presidential campaign after his paper was founded (in 1832) ended in the loss of the State and the nation by his candidate, Henry Clay, and Marcy defeated Seward for Governor the year following.

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The Whig party, as the National Republicans had come to be called, was stunned by these defeats, and when Harrison ran against Van Buren in 1836, Van Buren carried forty-two of the fifty-six counties of New York State, Massachusetts wasted her vote on Webster, and Van Buren carried New England and had a popular majority over his three opponents. But the Whigs were now to have as an ally the influence most potent, perhaps, in the politics of a republic—a financial panic and an era of hard times. How potent this influence is in shaping the fortunes of parties and candidates the history of the United States has proved in later years. On President Van Buren was laid the responsibility for the long list of business failures, the monetary evils, and the commercial stagnation. “What constitutional or legal justification can Mr. Van Buren offer to the people of the United States for having brought upon them all their present difficulties?” was the language of a remonstrance drawn up by a committee of New York city merchants, in April, 1837. In the following November the Whigs (in an “off-year”) carried New York city for the first time, as well as county after county in the State that had been considered Democratic beyond attack, and elected 100

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of the 128 members of the Assembly voted for.

Weed and his associates in the Whig party leadership saw in this change of public feeling hope of electing a Whig Governor in New York in 1838, as well as a Whig President in 1840, and they looked on a cheap weekly newspaper, which would vigorously espouse their cause and keep the voters informed and stirred up, as a necessary part of their campaign equipment.

"In looking about for an editor," says Weed in his autobiography, "it occurred to me that there was some person connected with the New Yorker possessing the qualities needed for our new enterprise. In reading the New Yorker attentively, as I had done, I felt sure that its editor was a strong tariff man, and probably an equally strong Whig. I repaired to the office in Ann Street where the New Yorker was published, and inquired for its editor. A young man with light hair and blond complexion, with coat off and sleeves rolled up, standing at the case, 'stick' in hand, replied that he was the editor, and this youth was Horace Greeley."

Greeley accompanied Weed and a member of the Whig State Committee, who was with him, to their hotel, where, after the nec-

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essary explanations, it was arranged that Greeley should edit at Albany a small weekly paper to be called the Jeffersonian, for which service he was to receive \$1,000 a year, the expense of the publication to be met by some Whigs of means. Only a man of Greeley's indomitable energy and willingness to work to the utmost limit of his strength would have undertaken this task in addition to the labor of editing the New Yorker. He understood that he would be obliged to spend nearly all his time in Albany when the Legislature was in session, and half his time in summer; and as Albany was not then connected with New York by rail, the trip there and back, to a tired man, was no small undertaking. But Greeley did not even ask time to consider the matter. His first trip to the State capital was made in a sleigh, and of his routine he wrote seven years later: "I regularly went up to Albany Saturday night, made up my paper there by Tuesday night, took the boat down and got out my New Yorker by Friday; then prepared copy for part of my next number, and caught my valise for Albany again." As a further illustration of his industry, we find this remark in his *Busy Life*: "As my small [Albany] paper did not require all my time, I made

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condensed reports of the Assembly debates for the Evening Journal, and wrote some articles for its editorial columns."

The political friendship—partnership, it has been called—thus begun between Weed and Greeley lasted until 1854, or, so far as Weed was concerned, until the nomination of Lincoln in 1860. Their usefulness as co-workers can not easily be overestimated. Weed was the cool, calculating, far-seeing politician, who would leave unsaid or undone what it was right to say or to do, if this would favor his party's success, and who worked for ends, without a constant criticism of means. Greeley was not nearly so far-seeing in political matters as he was credited with being, but he was desperately honest in his convictions, and eminently fitted to give them expression. As illustrations of Weed's foresight may be recalled his advice against the defeat of Van Buren's nomination to the English mission because this was likely to make him the candidate for Vice-President, as it did. Weed urged Webster to take the nomination for Vice-President on the Harrison, and again on the Taylor ticket, but in vain; if Webster had followed this advice, his ambition to be President would have been gratified. Weed personally favored a United

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States Bank, but he would not print in the Evening Journal, in 1836, Webster's speech at a Whig mass meeting, in Boston, in support of the bank scheme, and against Jackson's veto, saying that two sentences in the veto message would carry ten votes against the bank to one gained for it by Webster's eloquence—viz., that our Government "was endangered by the circumstance that a large amount of the stock of the United States Bank was owned in Europe," and that the bank was designed "to make the rich richer and the poor poorer."

Weed has been severely criticized for the defeat of Clay in the National Convention of 1839. Clay received early assurance that Weed was "warmly and zealously" in favor of his election, and Shepard, in his Martin Van Buren, says that "the slaughter of Henry Clay had been effected by the now formidable Whig politicians of New York, cunningly marshaled by Thurlow Weed." Weed did work against the election of Clay delegates to the convention, but he did so because he foresaw that Clay would probably be defeated at the polls, and that there was a good chance of Harrison's election; and he proved himself a wise friend of Clay by urging him, in the campaign of 1844, to write



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no letters, advice that was disregarded with disastrous consequences. Greeley who, as he expressed it, "profoundly loved Henry Clay," and looked for his nomination, defended Weed in this matter in his *Busy Life*, years after their political partnership was dissolved, saying, "If politics do not meditate the achievement of beneficent ends through the choice and use of the safest and most effective means, I wholly misapprehend them."

But while Greeley would not urge the nomination of his own favorite when he thought that favorite would be a weak candidate, he would not follow Weed in his views of expediency. Thus we find him saying, in one of his early letters to Weed: "I think you take the wrong view of the political bearing of this matter, *though I act without reference to that*" (the italics are his), and Weed was powerless to repress Greeley's advocacy of what he considered vagaries in the *Tribune*.

Weed says that he found Greeley in the early years of their acquaintance, when they were most intimate, "unselfish, conscientious, public-spirited, and patriotic. He had no habits or taste but for work—steady, indomitable work."<sup>1</sup> The young man was at

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<sup>1</sup> Lewis Gaylord Clark, in the *Knickerbocker*, said of Greeley: "A man careless, it may be, of the style of his dress, pre-

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that time by no means unknown out of his own office in New York city. He had taken as practical an interest in political meetings as his time would allow, and had so far overcome the feeling of ridicule with which his first appearance had been greeted, that he had been offered (and declined) a place on the city Assembly ticket. His pen, too, was in demand, and for editorial contributions to, and for a time the practical supervision of, the *Daily Whig*, a short-lived journal, he received a salary of \$12 a week.<sup>1</sup>

The first number of the *Jeffersonian* was issued on February 17, 1838, with Horace Greeley's name as editor under the title. Its prospectus announced its purpose to be "to supply a notorious and vital deficiency—to furnish counties and neighborhoods not otherwise provided with correct and reliable information upon political subjects," at a

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ferring comfort to fashion, but yet of scrupulous cleanliness in person and habiliments always; possessing a benevolent heart, and 'clothed with charity as with a garment'; frank and fearless in the expression of his opinions, whether such opinions are to be praised or execrated; of infatigable industry, and unpretending, kindly manners—this is Horace Greeley."

<sup>1</sup> Greeley, in a letter to R. W. Griswold dated March 18, 1839, said: "I think better of my new pet, the *Whig*. I write the editorial for that, and edit it generally. Don't you think it better than formerly? If not, it's wretched bad, that's a fact. It is rather gaining in patronage."

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price within the reach of all (six subscriptions for \$3). It was not to be a mere party organ, but would print the views of public men on both sides. The Jeffersonian was an eight-page quarto, containing usually a page of editorial discussion, the text of important speeches in Congress, reports of the proceedings of Congress and of the Legislature, and a summary of general news. The modern reader would pronounce it dull, with its columns of speeches and by no means "sparkling" editorials. One of the notable contrasts between the political journals of those days and of the present is found in the vastly greater importance which editors then attributed to speeches at Washington and Albany. The editor in the thirties and forties placed such matter, as well as full reports of legislative business, at the head of his list of "reliable information upon political subjects." Nowadays the compliment of printing in full a speech made in Congress or the Legislature is rarely paid, and the largest daily papers do not give a complete summary of the proceedings of Congress, allowing their special correspondents to serve up to their readers only the most entertaining subjects.

Greeley was a member of the Young

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Men's Whig State Committee, and after the nominations were made, the Jeffersonian warmed up to its campaign work. Here is one of its appeals to the Whigs of New York: "The eyes and the hopes of the Union are now upon New York. The Empire State must determine the great question at issue between the People and the Usurpers. She is the last and only barrier between FREEDOM and DESPOTISM. She must breast the shock alone." The Whigs carried New York State by 15,000 and elected Seward Governor in 1838 by about 38,000, and as the 15,000 copies of the Jeffersonian circulated principally among readers who had no other paper, Greeley's modest assumption that "it did good" will not be disputed. The suspension of the publication was announced in the issue of February 9, 1839.

In the next two years the Whig cause did not flourish, almost all the States which voted in 1839 showing a return to the Democrats, New York remaining Whig by a reduced majority. Harrison received the nomination for President in the first Whig National Convention, in 1839, and one of the most exciting campaigns in the history of the country followed. "Give Harrison a log cabin and a barrel of hard cider, and he will stay con-

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tented in Ohio, and not aspire to the presidency," was the unfortunate sneer of a Democratic editor. From that day "log cabin" and "hard cider" became Whig rallying cries, and successful ones, as the result proved.

Greeley's editorship of the *Jeffersonian* had so satisfied the party managers at Albany—and shrewder ones never held council—that they selected him to conduct a Harrison campaign paper, to be published in New York city, and to be called the *Log Cabin*. The first number of this paper—a folio, 15 by 28 inches—dated New York and Albany, appeared on May 2, 1840, the title line containing a picture of a log cabin, with a cider barrel beside it, and a Harrison-Tyler flag waving in front. The subscription price was fifty cents for six months, or seven copies for three dollars; single copies costing two cents. The publishers described it as "a political and general newspaper, to be devoted to the dissemination of truth, the refutation of slander and calumny, and the vindication, by fair and full citations from the recorded history of our country, of the character and fame of one of her noblest and most illustrious patriots" (Harrison).

The *Log Cabin* was a lively campaign

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paper. It printed in full the leading speeches of the day, made a feature of the campaign news of the different States, gave, with every number, the words and music of a campaign song (Weed thought the music unnecessary), and used illustrations occasionally. The Democrats opened the campaign with a volley of attacks on General Harrison, belittling his military and civil capacity, and raking up for use against him every public expression of his that would serve their purpose. The Log Cabin defended its candidate vigorously, under such headings as "Another Slander Nailed," "The Devices of Baseness," and urged non-partizan voters to support Harrison because he was the representative of Madison's view "that a President who should remove officers for political opinions alone would be justly liable to impeachment." The Log Cabin announced that it would not print articles "assailing the private character of Mr. Van Buren, or any of his supporters," but in doing so it gave this keen thrust: "We do not think it at all material to the present contest to prove Mr. Van Buren a slippery lawyer, dishonest as a man, or incorrect in private life. We have no warfare with him as an individual." As election day approached, the paper's efforts in behalf of its

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ticket became more and more earnest, and it closed the campaign with an appeal to "Freemen!" "Americans!" in which it said: "The hour of deliverance has come. . . . Press on to the polls. Speak to your friends and your neighbors. Implore the doubtful and hesitating to give one vote now for their country, and as many as they please hereafter for their party." Harrison received 234 of the 294 electoral votes, and no one will dispute Greeley's modest remark, "I judge that there were not many who had done more effective work in the canvass than I."

The Log Cabin was a remarkable success in one respect from the start. An edition of 30,000 of the first number was exhausted before the close of the week, and 10,000 more did not satisfy the demand. Later editions of 80,000 were printed, that being the limit, not of the demand, but of the editor's press-room facilities. Greeley had, when the publication of the Log Cabin was begun, taken one of his many partners in the firm of Horace Greeley & Co., which published the New Yorker, but the new partner was so alarmed by the rush of subscribers, in connection with the low subscription price, that he soon retired. An extra number of the Log Cabin was issued on November 9, giving the elec-

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tion returns, and a prospectus was published announcing that, yielding to urgent requests, the editor would soon begin a new series of the paper, the subscription price of which would be \$1.50 per annum. The first number of this new series was dated December 5, 1840, and the last number November 20, 1841, when it was succeeded by the Weekly Tribune.

With good business management, a paper with the circulation of the Log Cabin should have made money for its proprietors. Even in those days advertising might have been secured.<sup>1</sup> The experience in trusting subscribers of the New Yorker had not been a sufficient warning, and again credit was given, to be followed by another appeal to "friends who owe us," saying, "We implore you to do us justice, and enable us to do the same." Greeley was never a good business man, and it would have required a man of extraordinary business, as well as literary, ability to do the work he did in New York city and Albany from 1838 to 1841, with two journals almost constantly on his hands, and taking an active part in committee work, ma-

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<sup>1</sup> The Log Cabin in most of its numbers published less than a column of advertisements, increasing them to three and a half columns for a short time in November. The Herald in 1840 printed from ten to fifteen columns a day.



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king speeches, and receiving the hundreds of people who came to him with suggestions or for advice. In illustration of his business methods Parton relates that, one spring day, after getting the mail from the post-office, Greeley put it into his overcoat pocket, forgot all about it, and left his coat hanging on the peg until autumn, when he had occasion to use it again. Then he discovered the letters containing enclosures about which the writers had been for months inquiring in vain. His partners who, he says, "were no help to me," withdrew, one after another. But the Log Cabin did afford some pecuniary aid, and he wrote to Weed in January, 1841, that he was beginning "to feel quite snug and comfortable," and by the spring of that year he considered himself in a position to start the Tribune. But the New Yorker was a weight on his hands to the last. He gave its editorial conduct more largely to assistants in its last years, and tried hard to sell it, and its end came when it was superseded in September, 1841, by the weekly issue of the Tribune. He was then able to repay what was owing to subscribers who had paid in advance, although his books showed that \$10,000 was due him from delinquents. These books, he says, he never opened again, and they were

## Thurlow Weed's Discovery

"dissolved in smoke and flame" when his office was burned in 1845.

Greeley names four causes of the New Yorker's financial failure: That it was never properly advertised, that "it was never really published," the credit system with subscribers, and the lack of such facilities for distribution as railroads and news-companies afford to-day. Certainly it was "never really published," and the want of good business management made its financial success impossible.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE FOUNDING OF THE NEW YORK TRIBUNE

"I CHERISH the hope that the stone which covers my ashes may bear to future eyes the still intelligent inscription, 'Founder of the New York Tribune.' "

So wrote Greeley in his chapter on the Tribune in his *Busy Life*. In truth, the Tribune was his lasting monument. He had qualified himself to edit it. He had the courage to found it. He made it a greater power than has ever been exercised by another newspaper in the United States. He identified his own name with it as no other editor has been personally identified with the journal committed to his charge.

Greeley had entered on his thirty-first year when the first number of the Tribune was issued, and had been a resident of New York city less than ten years. In these years he had fought a desperate fight with poverty, almost unaided. But he had secured a recognition not only in the city and State, but in a wider circle. His editorial writing in the

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New Yorker had attracted the attention of so competent a critic as Thurlow Weed. His residence at Albany had widened his acquaintance with the lawmakers gathered from all parts of the State, and with the State officials and the managers of both parties. There was probably not another man in this country who was then editing two newspapers, and the editor of one newspaper was a person to be pointed out in those days. The big circulation of the Log Cabin had still further increased his reputation, and in 1841 he received an urgent invitation to assume the editorship of the Madisonian, a weekly which it was proposed to publish in Washington, D. C., as an Administration daily, and to which he afterward contributed. He was therefore justified in his belief that (if he referred to editorial experience) he "was in a better position to undertake the establishment of a daily newspaper than the great mass of those who try it and fail." As to his finances, he had a capital of about \$2,000, half of it in printing material. A daily newspaper in New York required much less capital in those days than now, but a man of more careful business instincts would have hesitated to embark in the enterprise with so restricted resources.

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Greeley had a very clear idea of the kind of daily paper that he wanted to edit. In a letter to Weed in January, 1841, he said: "As for the country press, two-thirds of it is a nuisance and a positive curse—a mere mouth-piece for demagogues who are ravenous for spoils. . . . What good have such papers as [naming some] and many more of that stamp, done us? . . . I do believe they are all a positive failure—that any paper in bad or injudicious hands is so." His purpose in publishing the Tribune is thus set forth in his *Busy Life*: "My leading idea was the establishment of a journal removed alike from servile partizanship on the one hand, and from gagging, mincing neutrality on the other."

The rivalry that he had to face may be understood from the following list of newspapers published in New York city in November, 1842, with their estimated circulation, as given in *Hudson's Journalism in the United States*:

<i>Cash Papers</i>			
Herald, 2 cents . . . . .	15,000	Chronicle, 1 cent. . . . .	5,000
Sun, 1 cent. . . . .	20,000	Tribune, 2 cents. . . . .	9,500
Aurora, 2 cents. . . . .	5,000	Union, 2 cents. . . . .	1,000
Morning Post, 2 cents. . . . .	3,000	Tattler, 1 cent. . . . .	2,000
Plebeian, 2 cents. . . . .	2,000		<u>62,500</u>

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<i>Sunday Papers</i>			
Atlas.....	3,500	Commercial Advertiser	5,000
Times .....	1,500	Evening Post.....	2,500
Mercury ....	3,000	Standard.....	400
News .....	500		<u>30,200</u>
Sunday Herald .....	9,000		
	<u>17,500</u>		
<i>Wall Street Papers</i>		<i>Saturday Papers</i>	
Courier and Enquirer..	7,000	Brother Jonathan.....	5,000
Journal of Commerce .	7,500	New World.....	8,000
Express.....	6,000	Spirit of the Times....	1,500
American!.....	1,800	Whip.....	4,000
		Flash.....	1,500
		Rake .....	1,000
			<u>21,000</u>

The Courier and Enquirer, Commercial Advertiser, American, and Express favored the Whig cause, but their price, as was that of the Evening Post and Journal of Commerce, of the opposition, was \$10 per annum, and they were commercial rather than political and general newspapers, as Hudson's classification shows. The Herald, then six years old, and the Sun, eight years old, while independent in name, were anti-Whig in sentiment, and not in good moral repute, and Greeley found encouragement in the advice of Whigs who thought the field for a cheap Whig daily a good one.

Having decided on his venture, he obtained a loan of \$1,000 from his friend James Coggeshall, to add to his own little capital,

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and promises of more, which he did not get. Then he printed in the Log Cabin of April 3, 1841, an announcement that on April 10 he would publish the first number "of a new morning journal of politics, literature, and general intelligence," adding: "The Tribune, as its name imports, will labor to advance the interests of the people, and to promote their moral, social, and political well-being. The immoral and degrading police reports, advertisements, and other matter which have been allowed to disgrace the columns of our leading penny papers, will be carefully excluded from this, and no exertion spared to render it worthy of the hearty approval of the virtuous and refined, and a welcome visitant at the family fire-side."

Greeley's hopes for the success of his journal rested largely on expectations of future Whig ascendancy, raised by the election of General Harrison to the presidency. How nearly the death of the President, which occurred on April 4, came to checking the Tribune enterprise Greeley explained in a brief autobiography, dated April 14, 1845, which was published after his death: "In 1841 I issued the first number of the Daily Tribune, which I should not have done had I not is-

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sued a prospectus before General Harrison's death."

The birthday of the Tribune fell on the date of the funeral parade held in New York city as a mark of mourning for the President. It was a day of sleet and snow, and every Whig heart was bowed down. Friends of the editor had secured for him less than five hundred subscribers in advance, but an edition of five thousand was printed, and of these, Greeley says, "I nearly succeeded in giving away all of them that would not sell." The first week's receipts were only \$92, with which to meet an outgo of \$525; but by the close of that week the paper had two thousand paid subscriptions, and this number increased at the rate of five hundred a week until a total of five thousand was reached on May 22, and the growth continued. Writing to Weed in June of that year, Greeley said: "I am getting on as well as I know how with the Tribune, but not as well as I expected or wished," and he called the giving of the list of letters by the postmaster to Stone's paper, "the unkindest cut of all." In a note to R. W. Griswold, on July 10, he said: "I am poor as a church mouse and not half so saucy. I have had losses this week, and am perplexed and afflicted. But better luck must come. I



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am fishing for a partner." Certainly if ever an editor needed a good business partner Greeley did, and he was fortunate in finding one.

Very soon after this note was written, Thomas McElrath surprised him with an offer to become his partner in the new enterprise, and this Greeley gladly accepted, and the announcement of the new firm was made on July 31. McElrath contributed \$2,000 in cash as an equivalent for a half-interest. Not until this arrangement was made did Greeley consider the paper "fairly on its feet." The new partner was a member of the firm of McElrath & Bangs, who kept a bookstore under the printing-office in which Greeley had set up the Testament, and his natural business tact and his experience supplied something in which the Tribune editor was always lacking. This partnership continued for more than ten years. Greeley has called McElrath's business management "never brilliant nor specially energetic," but so "safe and judicious" that it lifted the responsibility of the publication office from the editor's shoulders. The Weekly Tribune took the place of the New Yorker and the Log Cabin on September 20, and the new journal was then ready to address both city and rural

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readers. The issue of a semiweekly edition was begun on May 17, 1845.

The price of a single copy of the daily during the first year was one cent, which did not cover the cost of paper and printing, compelling the owners to look for their profits to the advertisements. Greeley asserted, in 1868, that "no journal sold for a cent could ever be much more than a dry summary of the most important, or the most interesting, occurrences of the day"—a view which many modern newspaper publishers would combat. The price was doubled with the beginning of the second volume, and increased to three cents in 1862, and to four cents in 1865. In 1866 it was enlarged to its present size.

The Tribune's rivals gave it unintended assistance at the start. The penny Sun, for instance, finding that the new journal was gaining some of its readers, tried to hire the Tribune's carriers to give up its distribution, and, failing in this, informed newsdealers that those who sold the Tribune could not handle the Sun. This action stirred up a "war" between the two papers, in which the public took a lively interest, and attention was thus called to a new venture which was confessedly so serious a competitor.

Before he had begun the publication of

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the Tribune Greeley had hired as an editorial assistant on the New Yorker a young man who, while a college student in Vermont, had been a valued contributor to that journal. This was Henry J. Raymond, in later years the founder of the Tribune's chief local competitor, the Times, and an antagonist in views social and political. Greeley has said that Raymond showed more versatility and ability in journalism than any man of his age whom he ever met, and that he was the only one of his assistants with whom he had to remonstrate "for doing more work than any human brain and frame could be expected long to endure."<sup>1</sup>

Under this management the Tribune in its first year forged steadily ahead, winning more and more of the public attention, if not always of the public approval. Greeley's

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<sup>1</sup> Young editors who grow discouraged under criticisms of their first work may find encouragement in contrasting this praise of Raymond's practised labor with the following description by Greeley of his first attempts (given in a private letter): "Raymond is a good fellow, but utterly destitute of experience. . . . He went to work as a novice would, shears in hand, and cut out the most infernal lot of newspaper trash ever seen. He got in type a column of Lord Chatham, which you published a month ago, three or four column articles of amazing antiquity and stupidity, and then gave out an original translation of a notorious story—which I fear we have published once. Thus the New Yorker is doomed for this week."

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own energy was tireless, his editorial contributions averaging three columns a day. There was no valuable news that he was afraid to print, nothing evil in his view that he was afraid to combat. The transcendentalists of the Boston Dial, to which Emerson and Margaret Fuller contributed, had a hearing in his columns, and the doings of a Millerite convention found publication. Greeley himself reported a celebrated trial at Utica, sending in from four to nine columns a day. He aroused a warm discussion by characterizing "the whole moral atmosphere of the theater" as "unwholesome," and refusing to urge his readers to attend dramatic performances, "as we would be expected to if we were to solicit and profit by its advertising patronage."<sup>1</sup> At the same time he offended the religious element by publishing advertisements of unorthodox books, and he accom-

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<sup>1</sup> Greeley always considered the stage inimical to many of his pet reforms. He remembered a song that he heard in a theater in derision of temperance, and a ridiculing of socialism by John Brougham, and he thought some of the impersonators of Irishmen "deserving of indictment as libelers of an unlucky race." In summing up his Dramatic Memories in his *Busy Life*, he said: "I judge that the wise man is he who goes but once to the theater, and keeps the impression then made on his mind fresh and clear to the close of his life"; but he had faith in a future stage "which will exert a benign influence over the progress and destiny of our race."

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panied an advertisement of an offer of \$50 for the best tract on the impropriety of dancing by church members, with an offer of prizes of his own for the best tracts on such subjects as "The rightfulness and consistency of a Christian's spending \$5,000 to \$10,000 a year on appetites and enjoyments of himself and family, when there are a thousand families within a mile of him who are compelled to live on less than \$200 a year."

To a modern reader who runs over the pages of the earlier volumes of the Tribune the small space allotted to local news will be noticeable. One reason for this was that the smaller city did not then supply the topics of general interest to be found in the daily doings of a Greater New York. Another was Greeley's refusal to cater to the sensational, as promised in his prospectus. What we call "yellow journalism" he called "the Satanic press." In one of his attacks on this press he said (February 17, 1849): "Sometimes it will cant in dainty terms of the naughty ferocity of a fist-fight while devoting half its columns to an enormous exaggeration of all the details of that fight, and tagging thereto everything that can serve to whet the vulgar appetite for such exhibitions." But if some big event—like a meeting in behalf of the

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Erie Railroad or a political gathering—required attention, the report of the Tribune of those days would do credit to any newspaper of our own.

When Greeley attacked a contemporary for some cause that aroused his indignation, his language was apt to descend to vituperation, and “villain,” “old villain,” “escaped State-prison bird,” and “deliberate falsehood” were among his favorite terms. The following on the result of a libel suit against the Herald, is an illustration: “The ruffian has got his deserts. The low-mouthed, blatant, witless, brutal scoundrel is condemned—condemned, too, by the people. Let not his sewer-sheet roll its nastiness and filth over the ‘codfish aristocracies,’ as he has called them for fifteen years.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “I remember very well a conversation between Mr. Horace Greeley and my father, Mr. Park Benjamin, during a railway journey which they were then taking to fulfil one of their numerous lecture engagements. Mr. Greeley came into the car where we were seated with his under lip sticking out, and evidently in a very disagreeable frame of mind. He seated himself, and having wrapped his legs in an old red blanket which he always carried with him, looked up and said: ‘Benjamin, that man Bennett would disgrace a pigsty. I have told him so often enough for him to become convinced of the fact, but it is like water on a duck’s back.’ Mr. Benjamin laughed, and replied: ‘Greeley, you are the bigger fool of the two. Don’t you see that those socdolagers of yours only serve

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During its first year the Tribune published a letter on the trial of the suit for libel brought by J. Fenimore Cooper against Thurlow Weed, in which the novelist secured a verdict of \$400. The writer of this letter remarked: "The value of Mr. Cooper's character, therefore, has been judicially ascertained. It is worth exactly \$400." This led Cooper to sue Greeley for libel, and the trial took place in Saratoga, in December, 1842. Greeley argued his own case, and the jury gave the plaintiff a verdict for \$200. As soon as this result was announced, Greeley took a sleigh for Troy, where he caught a boat, and early the next morning he was at his desk writing his own report of the trial. This report, which filled twelve columns of the Tribune of December 12, 1842, he finished by 11 P. M.—"the best single day's work I ever did." Cooper made this report the ground for another libel suit, but that suit never came to trial.

A young newspaper can secure no adver-

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to advertise him? The general public has no memory. If you want to make a man prominent in New York city abuse him. The public will forget in a few days all you said of him, and will merely remember his name.' To this Mr. Greeley replied, 'I think you are right, and I won't bother with the hog in the future.'" The Tribune from that time dropped Bennett.—(G. H. Benjamin, in New York Evening Post.)

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tising more effective than that which comes from making itself talked about, and the Tribune was soon talked of more widely than any other American newspaper. Its editor's personal following is indicated by the fact that he was so overrun with callers that he had to post a notice limiting visitors to the hours between 8 and 9 A. M. and 5 and 6 P. M. One may wonder when this editor of a morning daily, who got to his office before 8 A. M., found time to sleep. "For weeks together," he wrote to a friend in November, 1841, "my hour of quitting work has varied from 12 to 2.30 A. M. This is killing, especially to one whose hours have been regular and reasonable like mine." Subscriptions and advertisements kept on increasing, so that in its third year it was necessary to issue supplementary pages, to accommodate its advertisers. The issue of March 3, 1849, contains this notice: "For two months we have been obliged to leave out two to six columns of advertisements a day to make room for reading matter." In a dispute over the question of circulation with the Herald, the Tribune thus stated its own circulation on August 1, 1849: Daily, 13,330; weekly, 27,960; semi, 1,660; California edition, 1,920; European, 480. The circulation of the daily reached 45,000



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before the war, and during the exciting times of that conflict it mounted to 90,000, while the weekly edition had 217,000 subscribers in some of the years between 1860 and 1872. The profits in 1859 were \$86,000. Of its earnings in its first twenty-four years the sum of \$382,000 was invested in real estate, and an average of \$50,000 a year was divided among the stockholders.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In 1850 Greeley gave an example of the consistency of his views on cooperation by making the Tribune a stock concern, on a valuation of \$100,000, represented by 100 shares of stock, some 20 of which were sold to its editors, foremen, and assistants in the publication office.

## CHAPTER V

### SOURCES OF THE TRIBUNE'S INFLUENCE— GREELEY'S PERSONALITY

CONCEDING that the Tribune was the most influential newspaper in this country in Mr. Greeley's day, and that he, as almost synonymous with it, was the most influential editor, it is interesting to glance at some of the sources of this influence.

It must be granted at once that not even an editor of so strong a personality as Greeley could have secured the great clientage that came to be recognized as his if he had not supplied to his readers a good newspaper. The Tribune was a good newspaper almost from the start. Greeley's versatility now had full play, and he could not only hold the attention of a vast audience when he addressed the public in an editorial, but could do marvelous pieces of reporting, compose interesting correspondence—as witness his letters from Europe and about his trip across the continent—and act as chief critic

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over all the columns under his control. To him, therefore, belonged no mere honorary share of the repute of the Tribune as a newspaper.

But while on Greeley's shoulders rested most of the praise or blame for what appeared in its columns, his associates, to the day of his death, took no unimportant part in the making of the paper. In his first chief assistant, Raymond, he secured one of the ablest journalists of the day—a man who recognized the value of news, who knew how to select capable subordinates, and how best to direct their efforts. Among other contributors and editorial assistants to whom the Tribune was indebted were Margaret Fuller, Bayard Taylor, George William Curtis, Edmund Quincy ("Byles"), William Henry Frye, Hildreth, the historian, and Charles T. Congdon. Charles A. Dana joined the staff in 1847, and remained with it, a larger part of the time as managing editor, until 1862. George Ripley began writing for it in 1861, and, outliving Greeley, gave to its literary columns for twenty years a reputation that was unrivaled. Sidney Howard Gay, who was so conscientious an abolitionist that he abandoned his plan of becoming a lawyer because he could not take

## Sources of the Tribune's Influence

the oath to sustain the Federal Constitution, but to whose breadth of view and journalistic skill credit has been given for keeping the Antislavery Standard, which he edited, from being either narrow, bigoted, or dull, was one of Greeley's associates for ten years, dating from 1858, a part of the time as managing editor. Along with these worked a host of others, not so well known, who kept their departments up to the highest mark.

The scent for news was as keen in those days as it is now, and, while the difficulties of obtaining it were greater, no effort was neglected to accomplish the object in view. Railroads were then in their infancy, with less than 3,000 miles in operation in this country in 1840. The first steamers to Europe began running in 1838. The Morse telegraph was first operated between Baltimore and Washington in 1844, and the first telegraph office was opened in New York city, at No. 16 Wall Street, in January, 1846. The means then employed to secure news quickly from a distance were what was called the special express—relays of horses and riders, the latter sparing neither themselves nor their steeds in making the time required of them. The Tribune files contain some interesting accounts of the time made by its express riders.

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To obtain a Governor's message from Albany the Tribune contracted for three riders and ten relays of horses, and that the start from Albany should be made at noon, and New York city be reached not later than 10 p. m. The trip was finished at 9 p. m., a speed of a little less than eighteen miles an hour if the first rider did not start ahead of time—a point about which the Tribune in its boasting of the feat the next morning could not be certain. A rider charged with the duty of bringing in the returns of a Connecticut election left New Haven, in a sulky, at 9.35 p. m., on the arrival of the "express locomotive" from Hartford, reached Stamford in three hours; there encountered a snow-storm and darkness so intense that he ran into another conveyance near New Rochelle and broke a wheel; took the harness from his horse and pressed on on horseback, arriving at the office at five o'clock the next morning. The most energetic reporter of to-day could not exceed this rider in enterprise and persistency.

The ocean steamers of those days were not "greyhounds," and so great was the competition for the earliest foreign news that enterprising newspapers did not wait for the arrival of the mails by water at the nearest home port. On one occasion, when news of

## Sources of the Tribune's Influence

special importance was awaited, the Tribune engaged an express rider to meet the steamer (for Boston) at Halifax, and convey the news package with all speed across Nova Scotia to the Bay of Fundy, where a fast steamboat was to meet him and carry him to Portland, Me., whence a special locomotive would take him to Boston, from which point his budget would be hastened on to New York by rail and on horseback. Modern enterprise can not hope to excel this scheme, and we can sympathize with the editor in its failure to save him from being "beaten." The rider made his way across Nova Scotia through drifts so deep that his sleigh was often upset, and was hurried across the Bay of Fundy through ice in some places eighteen inches thick, making Boston in thirty-one hours from Halifax—several hours ahead of the ocean steamer. But from that point delays were encountered, and, although the last rider made the trip from New Haven in four hours and a half, a rival journal had had the news on the street for two hours before him. When Henry Clay delivered an important speech on the Mexican War, in Lexington, Ky., on November 13, 1847, the Tribune's report of it was carried to Cincinnati by horse express, and thence transmitted by

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wire, appearing in the edition of November 15. During the Mexican War a pony express carried the news from New Orleans to Petersburg, Va., the nearest telegraph station, in this way delivering the New Orleans papers of March 29 at the telegraph office on February 4. The exploits of these expresses were described by the press all over the country, and all this gave the competing journals a big advertisement.

I am inclined to think that what did as much as anything to widen Greeley's reputation, and to advertise his journal in its early days, was his devotion to "isms." One of his laudators had insisted that he had only two of these, but that assumption did him an injustice. "No other public teacher," to quote his own words, "lives so wholly in the present as the editor; and the noblest affirmations of unpopular truth—the most self-sacrificing defiance of a base and selfish public sentiment that regards only the most sordid ends, and values every utterance solely as it tends to preserve quiet and contentment, while the dollars fall jingling into the merchants' drawer, the land-jobbers' vault, and the miser's bag—can but be noted in their day, and with their day be forgotten." Herein we get Greeley's idea of "isms," a conception not

## Sources of the Tribune's Influence

unlike Carlyle's definition of a certain abbot's Catholicism—"something like the isms of all true men in all true centuries."

The Tribune was started when, in the words of John Morley, "a great wave of humanity, of benevolence, of desire for improvement—a great wave of social sentiment, in short—poured itself among all who had the faculty of large and disinterested thinking"; a day when Pusey and Thomas Arnold, Carlyle and Dickens, Cobden and O'Connell, were arousing new interest in old subjects; when the communistic experiments in Brazil and Owen's project at Hopedale inspired expectation of social improvement; when Southey and Coleridge meditated a migration to the shores of America to assist in the foundation of an ideal society, and when philosophers on the continent of Europe were believing that things dreamed of were at last to be realized. Greeley's mind was naturally receptive of new plans for reform—a tendency inherited, perhaps, from his New England place of birth, "that land in which every ism of social or religious life has had its origin." The hard experience of his own family, as he shared it in his early boyhood, led him to think that something was wrong somewhere in man's struggle for ex-



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istence, and his observations among the city poor during the hard times of 1837 enlisted his sympathies in behalf of all who live by labor. When, therefore, he found himself in control of a daily newspaper, he would not have been Horace Greeley if he had not been ready to make a "most self-sacrificing defiance" of public opinion in behalf of doctrines which he considered right.

What seemed to his fellow Whig leaders, in the early years of the Tribune, vagaries—his advocacy of Fourierism, extreme temperance legislation, etc.—gave them much annoyance, as likely to hurt the political cause with which Greeley's name and paper were associated, and they often labored with him on the subject. In minor points they met with some success, but when his mind was once made up, expediency was a futile argument with which to approach him. In a letter to Weed, dated February, 1842, after describing a sleepless night he had passed because of some of Weed's criticisms, he made this declaration of personal independence:

"You have pleased, on several occasions, to take me to task for differing from you, however reluctantly and temperately, as though such conditions were an evidence, not merely of weakness on my part, but of some

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black ingratitude or heartless treachery. . . . I have given, I have ever been ready to give you, any service within my power; but my understanding, my judgment, my conscientiousness of convictions, of duty and public good, these I can surrender to no man. You wrong yourself in asking them, and in taking me to task like a schoolboy for expressing my sentiments respectfully when they differ from yours. . . . Do not ask me to forget that I, too, am a man; that I must breathe free air or be stifled."

The New Yorker in its last year contained a series of articles on "What shall be done for the Laborer," in which it held to the principle that the "basis of all social and moral reform" lay "in a practical recognition of the Right of every human being to demand of the community an opportunity to labor and to receive a decent subsistence as the just reward of such labor." Greeley's sympathies were therefore ready to interest him in Albert Brisbane, a convert to Fourier's teaching, who had made the acquaintance of the French philosopher in France, and his friends, from his conversation, soon found that he had accepted Fourier's views. Brisbane edited a magazine called The Future, which was printed in Greeley's office, and

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whose prospectus said: "The primary, positive, and definite object of its labors will be to show that Human Happiness may be promoted, knowledge and virtue increased, vice, misery, waste, and want infinitely diminished, by a reorganization of society upon the principle of Association, or a combination of effort, instead of the present system of isolated households."<sup>1</sup> The Tribune of November, 1841, contained an editorial which said: "We have written something, and shall yet write much more, in illustration and advocacy of the great Social revolution which our age is destined to commence, in rendering all useful Labor at once instructive and honorable, and banishing Want and all consequent degradation from the globe. The germ of this revolution is developed in the writings of Charles Fourier." In the Tribune of March 1, 1842, was begun a series of articles by Brisbane on "Association," which were continued for many months. That the Tribune and its editor might not be held respon-

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<sup>1</sup> Henry J. Raymond wrote to R. W. Griswold in 1841: "Greeley got himself into a scrape by connecting himself with it (The Future), and the city—especially the Sunday—papers came down upon him with a vengeance. He's rather sorry that he enlisted, and is trying to take the curse off by advertising Brisbane's name as editor."

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sible for the views expressed, each of these articles (with a few exceptions) bore this caption: "This column has been purchased by the advocates of Association, in order to lay their principles before the public. Its authorship is entirely distinct from that of the Tribune."

The Tribune had little to say on the subject while it was publishing the Brisbane essays, but on January 20, 1843, the Fourier Association of the City of New York was formed, and Greeley was the first-named director of the North American Phalanx, organized soon after, with a capital of \$400,000, to put the Association idea into practise, and the Tribune of January 27, in that year, said: "We can not but believe that Association, with its concert of action, its unity of interests, its vast economies, and its more effective application of labor and other means of production will be extremely profitable, and offer to those who enter it not only a safe and lucrative investment of their capital and a most advantageous field for their industry and skill, but social and intellectual enjoyments, and every means of a superior education of their children." The "Brook Farm" experiment, which was later placed on a Fourier basis, was initiated in 1841, and the

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"Sylvania" enterprise, in Pike County, Pennsylvania, in 1843.

The plant of the North Amercian Phalanx was established near Red Bank, N. J. Only one-quarter of the capital was paid in, but a big dwelling for the members and their families, called the Phalanstery, was erected, with a steam apparatus for cooking and washing, and mills, storehouses, and other buildings. All the members were divided into groups, each of which was assigned its outdoor or indoor work. This experiment attracted a great deal of attention. Charles A. Dana and his family were for a time residents of the Phalanstery, and Margaret Fuller, Frederica Bremmer, and Rev. W. H. Channing were among its visitors; but the Phalanx, like "Brook Farm" and "Sylvania," was not a permanent success. "Sylvania" passed into the hands of the mortgagee in two years, and, after a disastrous fire, "with some other setbacks," the property of the Phalanx was sold, its debts were paid, and the stockholders received a dividend equal to about 65 per cent of their investment.

The Tribune and its editor incurred a great deal of criticism, and the paper lost some readers, because of Greeley's espousal

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of the socialist doctrines, but he refused to disassociate himself from the experiments while they were being tried, and the attacks on him helped to advertise him and his paper, and increased its circulation among those who could not regard as inherently wrong a cause supported, or countenanced, by men like George Ripley, Charles A. Dana, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Parke Godwin. In February, 1841, Greeley wrote to Weed that he took a wrong view of the political bearing of the Fourier matter, explaining: "Hitherto all the devotees of social reform of any kind have been regularly repelled from the Whig party, and attracted to its opposite. It strikes me that it is unwise to persist in this course, unless we are to be considered the enemies of improvement, and the bulwarks of an outgrown aristocracy in this country."

In a letter to R. W. Griswold, Greeley said: "I do not regard either office or money as a supreme good; and, though I never had either, I have been so near to each as to see what they are worth, very nearly. I regard principle and self-respect as more important than either." When the *Courier and Enquirer*, in April, 1844, spoke of the *Tribune* as "the organ of Charles Fourier, Fanny Wright, and R. D. Owen, advocating from

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day to day the destruction of our existing social system, and substituting in its stead one based upon infidelity, and an unrestricted and indiscriminate intercourse of the sexes," the Tribune began its reply, "We do not copy the above with a view to defend ourselves from the cowardly falsehoods of the escaped State-prison bird," etc. As late as February 10, 1848, replying to some criticisms in the Herald and the Observer, the Tribune said: "Should the Tribune get much further ahead of the Herald in circulation and business, we shall expect to hear that Fourier was a Fiji cannibal and the original contriver of Asiatic cholera."

In 1846 the Courier and Enquirer accepted a challenge by the Tribune to a discussion of Fourierism, and its articles were written by Greeley's former assistant, Henry J. Raymond, who had joined its staff in 1843. Raymond denied that the condition of the laboring classes was as bad as the Fourierites pictured it, and called the new doctrines hostile to Christianity, to morality, and to conjugal constancy. After the close of this debate the Tribune practically dropped the subject. Greeley's conviction, in the light of his later years, was that the social reformers were right on many points, and that Fourier

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was the most practical of them. He set forth in 1868, as part of his social creed, the following affirmations:

"I believe that there need be, and should be, no paupers who are not infantile, idiotic, or disabled; and that civilized society pays more for the support of able-bodied pauperism than the necessary cost of its extirpation.

"I believe that they babble idly and libel Providence who talk of surplus labor, or the inadequacy of capital to supply employment to all who need it.

"I believe that the efficiency of human effort is enormously, ruinously, diminished by what I term Social Anarchy. . . . It is quite within the truth to estimate the annual product of our national industry at less than one-half of what it might be if better applied and directed.

"The poor work at perpetual disadvantage in isolation, because of the inadequacy of their means. . . . Association would have these unite to purchase, inhabit, and cultivate a common domain—say, of 2,000 acres—whereby these advantages over the isolated system would be realized" (mentioning economy, etc.).

But, while holding to these beliefs, he acknowledged the difficulty of living up to them.



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His own experience had shown him that a prime obstacle to a successful social experiment was "the kind of persons who are naturally attracted to it, the conceited, the crotchety, the selfish, the headstrong, the pugnacious, the unappreciated, the played-out, the idle, and the good-for-nothing generally; who, finding themselves utterly out of place and a discount in the world as it is, rashly conclude that they are exactly fitted for the world as it ought to be." He had found, too, that, where such experiments had been a success, they rested either on a communistic basis (and he would not admit that a member contributing \$100,000 to an industrial enterprise should stand on the same footing as one who brings nothing, or that a skilled mechanic should receive no more than a ditcher) or on a "firm and deep religious basis." In other words, the system as he took it up originally was a failure, and a scheme as he would have limited it would have been rejected by modern socialists.

Greeley was attracted by Sylvester Graham's dietetic doctrine that there is better food for man than the flesh of animals; that all stimulants, including tea and coffee, should be avoided; that bread should be made of unbolted flour, and that spices should not

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be used, and only the least possible salt. After hearing Graham lecture, he became an inmate of his boarding-house, where the table conformed to the new views, and it was there that he met his future wife, Miss Mary Y. Cheney, a native of Connecticut, who was teaching in North Carolina, and who was even more susceptible to new doctrines than was her husband. Greeley used no alcoholic liquors, did not care for tea, and had given up coffee when he found his hand trembling after partaking of it at an evening entertainment. He preferred meat, in after years, to "hot bread, rancid butter, decayed fruit, and wilted vegetables," but always declared that, if we of this generation confined ourselves to a Graham diet, our grandchildren would live longer than we shall, and require less care from doctors. Mrs. Greeley lived up to her belief most conscientiously in their early married life, making no alteration in her table, and offering no excuse, when guests were present. "Usually," Greeley tells us, "a day, or at most two, of beans and potatoes, boiled rice, puddings, bread and butter, with no condiments but salt, and never a pickle, was all they could abide; so, bidding her a kind adieu, each in turn departed to seek elsewhere a more congenial hospitality."

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Mrs. Greeley made the acquaintance of Margaret Fuller in Boston, and attended the conversations, for women only, planned by Miss Fuller, to discuss what woman was born to do, and how she could do it, and it was at Mrs. Greeley's invitation that Margaret became a member of the Greeley household when she went to New York. Until the latter part of the year 1844 the Greeleys had lived within less than half a mile of the Tribune office, one experiment in Broome Street convincing the editor that that location was too far from his work. After his exertions in the great Clay campaign of 1844 the family took an old wooden house, surrounded by eight acres of land, on the East River, at Turtle Bay, nearly opposite Blackwell's Island. Margaret Fuller described it as "two miles or more from the thickly settled part of New York, but omnibuses and cars give me constant access to the city." She did not complain of her accommodations there, but Greeley suggests that, in her physical condition, a better furnished room and a more liberal table would have added to her happiness.

Greeley did not grant a ready acceptance to all of Miss Fuller's views. She wrote a great deal for the Tribune, however, on social questions, book reviews (including a very un-

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complimentary one of Longfellow's poems), and afterward letters from Europe, and Greeley has given generous praise to her contributions and her aims. But when she demanded "the fullest recognition of social and political equality" for women, he was willing to concede the justness of this demand only on condition that the enfranchised woman "would emancipate herself from the thralldom to etiquette, and the need of a masculine arm in crossing the street." Until this emancipation was secured he "could not see how the 'woman's rights theory' is ever to be anything more than a logically defensible abstraction";<sup>1</sup> and he declared his belief that "a good husband and two or three bouncing babies would have emancipated [Margaret] from a deal of cant and nonsense." Thus we see that there were "isms" to which Greeley could not be attracted.

Greeley was responsible for an impression, which gained wide currency at the time, that the Tribune editor was a believer in spir-

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<sup>1</sup> In printing a full report of the first women's convention, held in Ohio, the Tribune, on May 1, 1850, declared that a sincere Republican could give no adequate reason for refusing the suffrage to women if they should, as a body, demand it, because it was "a natural right, however unwise or unnatural the demand." This view was combated by Dr. Horace Bushnell in his *Women's Suffrage*.

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itualism, especially as demonstrated in the "rappings" of the Foxes, which attracted so much attention in 1848. The Tribune did, in December, 1849, publish as a matter of news an account of the "rappings," signed by responsible citizens of Rochester, while Greeley was in Washington as a member of Congress; but in a long review of a book on the "rappings" the next month it said: "We have not meant to imply that any statement in this book is necessarily false or incredible, but only that they are of such a nature as to require a very large amount of unimpeachable evidence to sustain them." Some two years later, Greeley was present at one of the Fox séances in a hotel in New York, but he was not impressed with their exhibition.

His wife, whose attention had been turned to things spiritual by the recent death of the son whom they so greatly mourned, attended several of the séances, and was so much interested that she invited the Foxes to spend several weeks at her house, and exhibitions of "rappings" given there were widely talked of, and Greeley's name was naturally associated with the business. But this was not an "ism" that won his unconditional acceptance, and he told a correspondent, through

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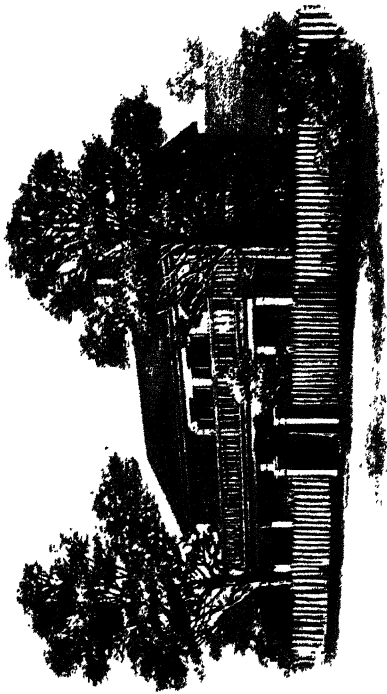
the Tribune, that "ghosts who had anything worth listening to would hardly stoop to so uninteresting a business as hammering." In his autobiography he pronounced the so-called spiritual communications "vague, unreal, shadowy, trivial," but added, of the "communications" made by "mediums": "That *some* of them are the result of juggle, collusion, or trick I am confident; that others are *not*, I decidedly believe."

A subject not to be classed as an "ism," in which Greeley always manifested the greatest interest, and which won for him the regard of a vast clientage, was farming. "I should have been a farmer," he wrote in 1868. "Were I now to begin my life over I would choose to earn my bread by cultivating the soil." The lack of intelligence displayed in New England agriculture was impressed upon him in his boyhood, and he never wrote more enthusiastically than in teaching farmers what he thought they ought to know. In the forties his editions began to publish reports of the sessions of the Farmers' Club in connection with the American Institute, and large space was always devoted in the Weekly Tribune to agricultural subjects.

In no character was Greeley so satirized as in that of a farmer, professing to give instruc-

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tion on a subject about which he had no practical knowledge, and his agricultural experiment at Chappaqua received a vast amount of attention from pen and pencil. But such sneers were far astray. Greeley's ideas on farming were not quixotic; they were good, and they were founded on the advice of the best authorities of the day. The Chappaqua estate was ridiculed on the assumption that it did not "pay." Most of the "gentlemen farmers" of this country would have to confess to a similar failure of their experiments if judged by their account books. Chappaqua, too, was not selected by Greeley, but by his wife, or rather to meet three conditions on which she insisted—viz., a spring of pure water, a cascade or brawling brook, and a tract of evergreen woods, and, to be accessible to the busy editor, the site must be near the city. The best he could do, in satisfying these conditions, was to accept with them "a rocky, wooded hillside, sloping to the north of west, with a bog at its foot." Much money was spent on this unpromising tract that might have been saved where so many obstacles were not to be overcome; but the owner overcame many of these, and by intelligent methods. When he wrote his autobiography he declared that he had been



Greeley's house at Chappaqua.





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“making ” rather than “working ” a farm, but he insisted that “good farming ” would pay, and every intelligent observer of our day will testify that most farming failures are due to bad farming.

In the early seventies the Tribune printed a series of articles on farming, by its editor, and they were afterward collected under the title “What I Know of Farming.” A reading of these essays will give any competent judge a good opinion of the writer's practical knowledge of the subject. There is excellent counsel to young farmers about the selection and preparation of a farm; suggestions about draining which have since been accepted by thousands of agriculturists; sound views about waste in the use of fertilizers; pleas for birds as farmers' assistants, and sensible advice on such subjects as deep plowing, level culture for potatoes, and the necessity of keeping farm accounts.

Merely to mention subjects under the general classification of reforms to which the Tribune gave support in its earlier years, we may recall its enthusiastic defense of the Irish cause in 1848, and of the cause of Hungary, in whose behalf it proposed the raising of a patriotic loan, in shares of \$100; its championship of cooperation in labor; its

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gradual approach to the radical view of temperance legislation represented by the Maine law, and its opposition to capital punishment, to more liberal divorce laws, and to flogging in the navy.

It is true that its espousal of many causes raised up a host of enemies for the Tribune, and no other newspaper in the United States was looked on as so dangerous by those who did not agree with it. Nevertheless, the champion whose sword was naked for an attack on any worthy foe was an intellectual hero in thousands of eyes, and when Raymond started the Times in 1852 to supply a journal of political views similar to those advocated by the Tribune without the Tribune's "vagaries," the new enterprise succeeded, but it made no serious inroads on the circulation of the older one.<sup>1</sup> Greeley came to be a sort of general counsel for many people, some of whom could undoubtedly be classified among that "fringe of the unreasonable and half-cracked, with whom," Higginson says, "it is the tendency of every reform to surround itself." Before the Tribune was a year old its editor told his readers, "We have a number of requests to blow up all sorts of

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<sup>1</sup> Greeley complained that the Times's circulation exceeded that of the Tribune in New York city.

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abuses," and he added, with that self-confidence which always characterized him, "which shall be attended to as fast as possible." Greeley thoroughly enjoyed his reputation as a philosopher and a seer, and a glance through his columns will show how little he was hindered by modesty in giving advice, those receiving his ministrations including young men seeking employment, young doctors and lawyers, country merchants, would-be editors, and inquiring farmers.

Greeley's lectures also gave him and his paper a good deal of advertising. It is somewhat difficult to realize to-day the importance of the lecture platform when "it was considered a sort of duty for educated men to have on hand a lecture or two which they were willing to read to any audience which was willing to ask them."<sup>1</sup> Emerson wrote to a friend in 1843, "There is now a 'lyceum,' so called, in almost every town in New England, and if I would accept an invitation I might read a lecture every night." But all lecturers were not expected to contribute their wisdom or entertainment without compensation. It was said in the early fifties that "Ik Marvel," from the delivery of one not very good lec-

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<sup>1</sup> Hale's Lowell and his Friends.

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ture, could secure money enough to support himself while he was writing a really good book, and that one course of Bayard Taylor's lectures brought him profit enough to pay his way ten times around the world.

Greeley always loved to talk, and the lecture-field was a tempting one to him. In later years it used to be said in the office that the only way he could be induced to take a vacation was to start him off on a lecturing tour. His first attempt on the platform was made in New York in February, 1842,<sup>1</sup> and he wrote soon after, asking his friend Griswold to get him an engagement in Philadelphia, saying, "I know there are hardly a hundred persons in Philadelphia who know of me," but suggesting that he could "fill a hole" in a program. Greeley was never an orator, but people have a curiosity to see a public man of wide reputation, and after the Tribune became established he "drew" on this account, although his subjects were abstract rather than, in the common acceptance, entertaining. Eleven such lectures, written between 1842 and 1848, each of them in less than a day, were published in 1850 under the title *Hints toward Reform*, and the subjects included

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<sup>1</sup> Letters of R. W. Griswold, p. 104.

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Human Life, The Emancipation of Labor, and The Formation of Character. In a lecture on Poets and Poetry, printed in his autobiography, he commented freely on almost the entire list of English poets, pronouncing *The Faery Queen* "a bore, unreal, insupportable," and confessing his hatred of the Toryism of Shakespeare; and in another lecture, on Literature as a Vocation, he styled the great dramatist "the highest type of literary hack," finding in his writings a combination of "starry flights and paltry jokes, celestial penetration and contemptible puns," and expressing his unqualified admiration for Mrs. Hemans, in whose *Adopted Child* he had found "hours of pure and tranquil pleasure."

Most of the audiences which listened to these discourses were lyceums, or young men's associations in country villages. The great place for lectures in New York city was the Tabernacle, which seated 3,000 persons. Greeley's audiences there numbered on an average 1,200 in the early fifties. In a course of lectures delivered in Chicago in 1853, when its population was about 30,000, Greeley stood second as a "drawing card," being only preceded by Bayard Taylor in a list which included John G. Saxe, R. W. Emerson, The-

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odore Parker, George William Curtis, Horace Mann, and E. P. Whipple.

In 1848 Greeley was elected to Congress, for the only time in his career, accepting a nomination in the upper district of New York city, to fill a vacancy caused by the unseating of a Democrat on charges of fraud at the polls, without the seating of his Whig opponent. As the term would last only from December to March, and the original candidate declined the nomination for the short term when the nomination for the full term was denied him, Greeley got the place. He attracted wide attention during his short residence in Washington, and his paper received through him a vast amount of advertising, for a large part of which it had to thank his unwise enemies. If he was not the only editor who was a member of that Congress, he was certainly the only member who acted as editorial correspondent of so well known a newspaper as the Tribune. His fellow members would therefore naturally look on him as doubly armed—prepared to meet them face to face, and to criticize them with his pen; and his readers would regard his letters as of unusual value, coming from one having the opportunity for an inside view of things.

Greeley went to Washington with a con-

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viction that the national legislators were as much in duty bound to attend strictly to their public business, and so to earn their pay, as was a man in private employment. Two days after he took his seat he scored the absentees. In a letter to the Tribune, speaking of the "annual hypocrisy of electing a chaplain," he said: "If either House had a chaplain who dared preach to its members what they ought to hear—of their faithlessness, their neglected duty, their iniquitous waste of time by taking from the treasury money which they have not even attempted to earn—then there would be some sense in the chaplain business." This he followed on December 22 with an exposure of the mileage abuse which involved him in a bitter contest with his fellow-members, and gained him wide notoriety.

Members of Congress then received pay at the rate of eight dollars a day, and mileage at the rate of forty cents a mile, by "the usual traveled route." When Greeley made his first call on the sergeant-at-arms for his money, he was shown a schedule giving the amount of mileage drawn by each member. Some of the figures appeared to him to be extravagant, and he at once decided on a step, conscientiously taken, but



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which gave the best evidence of his newspaper tact. He hired a man to make for him a table showing the actual distance traveled by each member in reaching the capital, the distance for which he was allowed mileage, and what the saving would have been had the mileage been computed over the shortest route. As most members made out their schedules to cover as many miles as possible, without reference to the more modern steamboat routes (and Greeley's amanuensis had taken the official mail route distances), his table, when the Tribune of December 22, containing it, came to Washington, excited a great sensation, every member being charged with receiving from \$2 to more than \$1,000 in excess of his equitable allowance. "I had expected that it would kick up some dust," says Greeley in his autobiography, "but my expectations were outrun." "I have divided the House into two parties," he wrote to his friend Griswold at the time; "one that would like to see me extinguished, and the other that wouldn't be satisfied without a hand in doing it."

For some days members simply discussed the matter with one another or with their critic. Him they could not bend. On December 27 the subject was brought to the

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attention of the House by an Ohio member named Sawyer, who had been previously held up to ridicule by a Tribune correspondent for eating his luncheon during the session behind the Speaker's chair, and who, in the table, was credited with receiving \$281 more than was his honest due. Mr. Turner, of Illinois, whose excess of mileage was nearly \$200, moved the appointment of a committee to inquire whether the Tribune's charges did not amount to an allegation of fraud against the members, and to report whether they were false or true. Turner charged the editor-member—whom he alluded to as “perhaps the gentleman, or rather the individual, perhaps the thing”—with seeking notoriety, and being engaged in a very small business. Greeley took part in the ensuing debate, holding tenaciously to the main point of his disclosure.

The discussion continued until January 16, when the committee made a report exonerating the members, and there the matter practically dropped. Greeley was accused, during the discussion, of employing in his newspaper correspondence time that he should have devoted to the public business in the House, and a fierce and somewhat embarrassing attack was made on him concerning

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a vote which he gave on an appropriation for the purchase of certain books—archives, debates, etc.—with which it was customary to supply members. He certainly got very much confused in his explanations. “For a time,” he says in his autobiography, “it looked as though the mileage men had the upper hand of me, and I was told that a paper was drawn up for signatures to see how many would agree to stand by each other in voting my expulsion, but that the movement was crushed by a terse interrogatory remonstrance by Hon. John Wentworth, then a leading Democrat. ‘Why, you blessed fools,’ warmly inquired ‘long John,’ ‘do you want to make him President?’” Wentworth’s remark showed how strongly public feeling had shaped itself on Greeley’s side of the main question. In one of the debates in the House a speaker declared that he had not seen a single newspaper that did not approve of Greeley’s course. How restive the public are regarding attempts of members of Congress to increase unduly their own emoluments may be learned by recalling the excitement caused by the act of 1816 increasing the pay of members (including those then in office) from \$6 a day to \$1,500 a year (Clay’s vote for this bill nearly causing his defeat for reelection),

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and the outburst of denunciation of the Congress which, in 1873, passed the so-called "salary grab" bill.

But the mileage abuse was not the only one to which Greeley drew attention. The waste of time was a constant subject of comment in his editorial correspondence, and on January 22 he moved an amendment to the general appropriation bill providing that members should not be paid when absent from their seats except in case of sickness or when employed elsewhere in public business, and he made a vain attempt to save the bonus of \$250 which it had been customary to vote to the House employees. The value of the attention which the seven-years'-old Tribune attracted all over the country because of its editor's course in Congress could not well be overestimated, and an indication of the practical result is seen in the fact that its advertising receipts were larger by \$7,830 in 1849 than in the year previous. The economist was received with great cordiality on the occasion of a trip to the West that he made in 1849, the marked warmth of his reception in Cincinnati calling out from him a special letter of thanks.

Greeley's personality was always impressed on the Tribune. His favorite text

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was some article in another newspaper, and a count of his editorials would probably show that a majority of them began with a quotation from, or a reference to, some other editor's views. His reply was very often emphasized by the line, "Comments by the Tribune," or the like, and if he desired to be particularly emphatic he would sign his initials, "H. G." His correspondence, when he was out of the city in the earlier years, often occupied the editorial columns, and he was fortunate in getting before the public in his travels. Thus, when he first visited England, in 1851, he was chairman of one of the juries of award in the World's Exhibition in London, delivered the address proposing the health of the architect of the Crystal Palace at a notable banquet, and gave his experience as an editor to a Parliamentary Commission. When he visited Paris in 1855 he was arrested at the instance of a French exhibitor at the Crystal Palace exhibition in New York, who tried to hold him responsible for a statue that was broken there because he was a director in the enterprise, and he was imprisoned for two days in the Clichy prison. His trip across the plains, in 1859, was made a notable event, and the driver of the stage in which he crossed the Sier-

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ras was a sort of hero for the rest of his life.

Greeley "edited" the whole Tribune up to the day of his nomination for President. None of its columns escaped his supervision. He was not an easy man to please, as he considered all mistakes likely to be placed on his own shoulders. The style of his own editorial articles was clear, forceful, and concise, without rhetorical adornment, and he expected his assistants to follow his model. Writing to one of these who had gotten out a number of the New Yorker in 1840, while he was in Albany, Greeley said: "The last New Yorker was a very fair number, bating typographical errors, such as 'Dugal' for 'Dugald' Stuart, which is awful, as insinuating ignorance against us. I saw '*From whence*' in your verse, too. Don't you think that is shocking—positively shocking?" His letters to Charles A. Dana, written while he was watching the Banks speakership contest in 1855-'56,<sup>1</sup> give many pictures of him in the rôle of the editorial supervisor. One of these letters began thus:

"What would it cost to burn the Opera House? If the price is reasonable, have it

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<sup>1</sup> New York Sun, May 19, 1889.

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done and send me the bill. . . . All Congress is disappointed and grieved at not seeing Pierce and Cushing demolished in the Tribune. . . . And now I see that you have crowded out the little I did send to make room for Fry's eleven columns of arguments as to the feasibility of sustaining the opera in New York if they would only play his compositions. I don't believe three hundred who take the Tribune care one chew of tobacco for the matter!"

Again he wrote:

"I shall have to quit here or die, unless you stop attacking people here without consulting me;" and again: "If you were to live fifty years and do nothing but good all the time, you could hardly atone for the mischief you have done by that article on Benton. . . . I write once more to entreat that I may be allowed to conduct the Tribune with reference to the mile wide that stretches either way from Pennsylvania Avenue. It is but a small space, and you have all the world besides." Indicating his zeal for exactness, and his quick detection of an error, he wrote: "The Tribune of Monday says that the bank suspension took place in 1836. It was '37 (May 10). Please correct in Weekly."

Greeley was always easily approached,

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and the demands on his purse and influence were constant. He devoted a chapter of his autobiography to Beggars and Borrowers, but it gave no adequate idea of the money that such applicants obtained from him. He portrays many kinds of beggars—the “chronic,” the “systematic,”—and in summing up his experience says, “I can not remember a single instance in which the promise to repay was made good.” But he went on lending. To a clerk from New Hampshire, who, arriving in New York with his wife penniless, asked for a “loan” to take him back to his father’s house, Greeley replied, “Stranger, I must help you get away. But why say anything about paying me? You know, and I know, you will never pay a cent.” This makes us recall that “when the Spectator went out to meet Sir Roger de Coverley he could hear him chiding a beggar asking alms for not finding some work, but at the same time handing him sixpence.”

Some applicants, however, did meet with a refusal. Chauncey M. Depew has told of finding a visitor in Greeley’s editorial room when he made a call on him. The editor’s patience had evidently been almost exhausted, and as he wrote on steadily he would give an occasional kick toward the caller, who



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every now and then put in a word. Finally, turning round, Greeley said: "Tell me what you want. Tell me quick, and in one sentence." The man said, "I want a subscription, Mr. Greeley, for a cause which will prevent a thousand of our fellow-beings from going to hell." Greeley shouted, "I will not give you a cent. There don't half enough go there now." As Greeley was a Universalist, this reply was not so severe as it sounded.

The first time I saw Greeley was in the little room, just off the publication office, where he did his work in his later years. Having occasion to ask him about the publication of some article in the weekly edition, which was then in my charge, I found him busily writing, with a man, hat in hand, standing near him, evidently making some appeal. The desk was piled high with papers, and there was a litter of the same around him on the floor. Over his desk dangled the handle of a bell-cord, with which he could summon his messenger-boy, and by another cord were suspended his scissors, which would have been lost as soon as he laid them down. To his visitor he apparently paid no attention, although the man would occasionally interject a few words, fumbling his hat nervously. At last, having reached the bot-

## Sources of the Tribune's Influence

tom of a page, Greeley swung around in his chair, and, in his querulous voice, said, "I'll be d—d if I am going to spend my time getting New York offices for Jerseymen." Then the man went out.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE TARIFF QUESTION

GREELEY's sympathies were always in favor of a protective tariff. He heard the hard times of his boyhood in New England attributed to the "cheapness" of English products; both the political parties in the presidential campaign of 1828, when he was an apprentice in the East Poultney office, professed devotion to protection, and speeches which he heard at a consultation of protectionists in the American Institute, which he attended while waiting for a job during his first year in New York city, strengthened his already formed convictions. But during the earlier years of his editorial work in New York and Albany the tariff was not a prominent issue. The compromise act passed in 1833 continued in force until 1842, and, although it was not operating as Clay and other of his supporters anticipated (Clay looked for its speedy amendment), it was not made a "live issue." We find the existing tariff

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law named in the New Yorker as one of the causes of the hard times of 1836-'37, the possibilities of silk culture in New York State set forth, and the objections of the Evening Post to a proposed State bounty of fifty cents a pound on silk produced in the State warmly combated.

The compromise act provided for a reduction of all duties which exceeded 20 per cent under the act of 1832, on the following scale: 10 per cent of the excess to be removed on January 1, 1834; 10 per cent more on January 1, 1836; another 10 per cent on January 1, 1838, and a fourth on January 1, 1840; on January 1, 1842, one-half of the remaining excess was to be abolished, and the remainder of the excess on July 1, 1842, leaving, after that date, a uniform tax of 20 per cent. One of the arguments used by Clay to secure support for his compromise from his fellow protectionists was that it would be superseded before its ultra reductions took effect. But during the second administration of Jackson and the administration of Van Buren—the latter had no very clear views about the tariff—other financial questions occupied the attention of the country, and even during the hard times of 1837 the tariff was only incidentally alluded to in the discussion of reme-

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dies; and until after the election of 1840 no aggressive steps were taken to change the law. But the approach of the date when the horizontal rate of 20 per cent would go into effect was causing uneasiness. The duty on rolled bar iron, for instance, which was 95 per cent (specific) in 1832, had dropped to 42.5 on January 1, 1842, and would drop to 20 per cent in the coming July. Moreover, the extra session of Congress which assembled in June, 1841, had to face a deficit of the revenues.

As the Whigs were in control of both Houses they could make any change in the tariff on which they might agree, and to which the President would consent. Clay, their leader, quickly presented his program in the shape of a resolution setting forth the leading matters which should be acted upon, including, in order, the repeal of the Sub-treasury law, the incorporation of a United States Bank, and the raising of the necessary revenue both by an increase of duties and a loan. The extra session passed no tariff bill, but it did authorize a loan of \$12,000,000, which, on account of the condition of the public credit, the Treasury found it difficult to secure. In his message at the opening of the regular session in the following December,

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President Tyler recommended tariff revision, with a view to the substitution of discriminating for level rates, but without violating the spirit of the compromise of 1833. The Secretary of the Treasury, in his report, suggested that the condition of the finances would no longer permit a strict observance of that act. In the following March—just previous to his farewell to the Senate—Clay introduced resolutions favoring an increase to 30 per cent of the duties that would be reduced to 20 per cent in the following June, and at the same time a repeal of the law under which there was to be no distribution of the proceeds of land sales among the States so long as the tariff rate exceeded 20 per cent.

The death of Harrison elevated to the presidency a man whom Greeley in later years characterized as “an imbittered, implacable enemy of the party which had raised him from obscurity and neglect to the pinnacle of power.” The Tribune gave Tyler faithful support in the early part of his administration, even taking the view of only a minority of the Whigs in defending Webster’s course in remaining in the Cabinet after his associates, at Clay’s instigation, had resigned because of the President’s veto of the United States Bank bill. But a visit to

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Washington in December, 1841, convinced Greeley that Tyler was "treacherously coquetting with Loco-focoism" with a view to his own renomination. Greeley made a trip in 1842 through parts of New England, New York State, and Pennsylvania, including Washington in his itinerary, and on his return he foreshadowed his view of the issue to be made prominent in the next presidential campaign in a note from "the senior editor," in which he said: "The cause of protection to home industry is much stronger throughout this and the adjoining States than even the great party which mainly upholds it; and nothing will so much tend to *insure* the election of Henry Clay next President as the veto of an efficient tariff bill by John Tyler. . . . If a distinct and unequivocal issue can be made upon the great leading questions at issue between the rival parties—on protection to home industry and internal improvements—the Whig ascendancy will be triumphantly vindicated in the coming election." That year witnessed the struggle over the tariff between President Tyler and the Whig Congress, the President vetoing two bills<sup>1</sup> be-

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<sup>1</sup> Of Tyler's veto, the Tribune said: "If the spirit of national pride—the feeling of free sovereignty among the people—had not been stifled and destroyed by gradual and almost

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cause of provisions for the distribution among the States of the proceeds of land sales, and finally signing one which was decidedly protective, but which Calhoun declared was passed more to make a political issue than to please the manufacturers. This opinion was certainly in line with Greeley's recommendation.

From that time to the date of his nomination for President, Greeley, with the Tribune at his back, was the foremost advocate of a protective tariff in this country, addressing a larger constituency than any of the tariff advocates in Congress. He was early recognized as an authority on the subject, Weed placing only Hezekiah Niles above him. He was the author of an article in the Merchants' Magazine of May, 1841, which replied to a free-trader's argument, and he and McElrath began, in 1842, the publication of a magazine called The American Laborer, whose purpose was the inculcation of the protective doctrine. In November, 1843, he and Joseph Blunt defended the affirmative side in a debate in the Tabernacle in New York city on the ques-

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imperceptible encroachments upon their rights during the last twelve years, a voice would go forth from the heart of the nation which would *drive* to his duty the weak man whose selfish ambition now turns him from it."



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tion, "Resolved, That a protective tariff is conducive to our national prosperity," Samuel J. Tilden and Parke Godwin taking the negative. As he printed his argument on this occasion in his autobiography in 1868, it may be accepted as defining the groundwork of his belief.

He laid down and explained five positions:

1. "A nation which would be prosperous must prosecute various branches of industry, and supply its vital wants mainly by the labor of its own hands." History proved that an agricultural and grain-exporting nation had always been a poor nation.

2. "There is a natural tendency in a comparatively new country to become and continue an exporter of grain and other rude staples, and an importer of manufactures." This was true because, in a new country, the available labor is in demand for clearing fields, opening roads, etc., while older countries have not only an adequate labor supply, but capital and machinery.

3. "It is injurious to the new country thus to continue dependent for its supplies of clothing and manufactured fabrics on the old." The ruling price of grain in a district which exports it will be the price at the point to

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which it is exported, less the freight—that is, the price it brings there as obtained from the countries nearest at hand, and which can produce it most cheaply. The British manufacturer would only be obliged to mark the price of his cloths 5 per cent below the wholesale price of the same grade in Illinois in order to control the cloth market in this country. The free-trader who sees in this only more cloth for the money for the American purchaser, overlooks the point that the American grain-producing purchaser must, under free trade, look abroad for a market for his surplus grain at the lowest world's price—"in other words, while Illinois is making a quarter of a million dollars by buying her cloth where she can buy cheapest, she is losing nearly two million dollars on the net product of her grain."

4. "The equilibrium between agriculture, manufactures, and commerce, which we need, can only be maintained by means of protective duties." It would not be wise to buy boots and hose and knives and forks in Europe at a cost below the home price when the facility of paying for them manufactured at home would be greater.

5. "Protection is necessary and proper to sustain as well as to create a beneficent ad-

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justment of our national industry." Under this heading he explained that "if manufactures were protected as a matter of special bounty or favor to the manufacturers, a single day were too long" to continue the protection; protection should be afforded "for the sake of all protective labor." Why not do without protection when, under the tariff, you can manufacture cheaper than you can buy abroad? Because, under free trade, Europe can at any time dump on us its surplus product, and so ruin our own markets. He did not admit the existence of any foreign markets for American goods, and said, "If the American manufacturers can not make sales, the sheriff will and must. . . . Were it certain that the price of home products would be permanently higher than that of the foreign, I should still insist on efficient protection. . . . I look not so much to the nominal price as to the facility of payment. And, where cheapness is only to be attained by a depression of the wages of labor to the neighborhood of the European standard, I prefer that it should be dispensed with."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A series of 24 essays by Greeley, "designed to elucidate the science of political economy, while serving to explain and defend the policy of protection to home industry as a system of national cooperation for the elevation of labor," which had

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Henry Clay received the Whig nomination for President in 1844 without opposition, and Greeley threw himself into the campaign with all the devotion of one who loved the candidate "for his generous nature, his gallant bearing, his thrilling eloquence, and his lifelong devotion to what I [Greeley] deemed our country's unity, prosperity, and just renown." The Tribune early in the year had increased its size one-third and treated itself to a new "dress" (of type). As soon as the Clay ticket was in the field it issued a campaign weekly, called The Clay Tribune, fifteen subscriptions to which (for the campaign) cost only five dollars. Greeley never, probably, worked as he did in that year. His wife was in Massachusetts, and he spent most of his time in the office, scarcely giving himself opportunity to sleep. His contributions to the Tribune averaged three columns a day; he made as many as six speeches in some weeks, and he conducted (without the aid of a secretary) a large correspondence. "Very

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appeared in the Tribune, were published in book form in 1870. In these essays he not only elaborated his view that protective duties do not necessarily increase prices to consumers, and met many arguments advanced by revenue reformers, but he discussed paper money, usury, the balance of trade, slave and hired labor, cooperation, and kindred subjects.

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often," he says in his *Busy Life*, "I crept to my lodging near the office at 2 to 3 A. M. with my head so heated by fourteen to sixteen hours of incessant reading and writing that I could only win sleep by means of copious affusions from a shower-bath; and these, while they probably saved me from a dangerous fever, brought out such myriads of boils, that—though I did not heed them till after the battle was fought out and lost—I was covered by them for the six months ensuing, often fifty or sixty at once, so that I could contrive no position in which to rest, but passed night after night in an easy chair." It was in this campaign that Greeley won his position as the leading Whig expounder and defender of the doctrine of protection.

Greeley accepted the election of Polk as a personal defeat of himself. "I was the worst beaten man on the continent," was his own later expression. But he also believed that Clay might have been elected had all the Kentuckian's supporters worked as hard as he did. The circulation of 100,000 copies of his *Daily Tribune* and of 25,000 of his *Clay Tribune* would, he always thought, have secured Clay's election.

Greeley did not ignore, in the next few

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years, the growing importance of the slavery question, as it was shaping itself in connection with Texas annexation; but he did not abandon the tariff as his favorite leading issue for the campaign of 1848. Polk's letter to John K. Kane, in 1844, in which he had declared it "the duty of the Government to extend fair and just protection to all the great interests of the whole Union," had, together with the placing of Dallas on the ticket with him, taken a good deal of the protection wind out of the Whig sails, so that Greeley did not consider the result a fair test of the popular opinion on the tariff. He was encouraged, too, by the speedy passage of a new tariff bill by the Democratic Congress elected with Polk. The new Secretary of the Treasury, Robert J. Walker, of Mississippi, in his first report, strongly favored a lighter tariff, making what was considered an attack on the protection policy; and a bill which bore his name was passed (by the casting vote of Vice-President Dallas in the Senate, and against the vote of every Representative but one from Pennsylvania) which divided dutiable articles into classes, those in Schedule C, for instance, which included most products over which there was a special controversy, to pay a duty of 30 per cent on their

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*value*; the tariff of 1842 provided that iron, in this schedule, should pay so many dollars *per ton*. In 1846, Pennsylvania, in an "off year," chose sixteen Whigs out of her nineteen Representatives in Congress, and the Whigs made encouraging gains in other important States. Greeley strongly favored the nomination of Clay again in 1848, and another tariff campaign, but the convention named General Taylor.

## CHAPTER VII

### GREELEY'S PART IN THE ANTISLAVERY CONTEST

IN the tributes paid to Greeley's memory at the time of his death by fellow journalists in New York city, two, from the pens of men who had bitterly opposed him in many things, stand out prominent. "The colored race," said the World, "when it becomes sufficiently educated to appreciate his career, must always recognize him as the chief author of their emancipation from slavery, and their equal citizenship;" and the Evening Post conceded that, in the history of the American antislavery contest, "one of the most prominent places must be given to the sturdy, unflinching, and persistent assaults of the Tribune newspaper." His own estimate of the part he took in this contest was indicated in a speech at his reception in the Lincoln Club rooms in New York city, in June, 1871, when, referring to the Democratic "new departure" and the possibility of the Republicans going out of power, he said: "If it were my fate to



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go out at this moment, and every year of my life thereafter to be in the minority, prostrate and powerless, I should still thank God most humbly and heartily that he allowed me to live in an age, and to be a part of the generation, that witnessed the downfall and extinction of American slavery." To understand the value of Greeley's services in the anti-slavery contest it is necessary to examine the nature of that contest, the diverse views of the opponents of slavery, the public opinion in the North which had to be educated and directed, and the part taken in this work by the New York Tribune.

The early opponents of slavery in the United States were of two classes—first, the Abolitionists, technically so-called, who regarded slavery as a moral wrong so monstrous that their consciences demanded its immediate extinction; and, second, those who condemned slavery, but recognized the rights of the slaveholders under the Federal Constitution, and confined their efforts to opposition to the extension of slave territory, hoping for the gradual extinction of the institution where it was established. Greeley belonged to the second of these classes.

In view of Greeley's inclination to associate himself actively with reforms, regard-

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less of hostile criticism or the effect of such association on his personal welfare, it seems somewhat curious that we do not find him enrolled in the ranks of the early Abolitionists. He says that one of the incidents of his sojourn in East Poultney, Vt., which made a great impression on him, was the rescue of a slave who had fled there from New York State, and who, under the law of that State, was beholden to his master until he was twenty-eight years old. "Our people hated injustice and oppression," was the only explanation he thought it necessary to give of their action. The early Abolitionists, too, were in sympathy with him on many subjects. E. Rogers, in the *Herald of Freedom*, said: "Abolitionists are generally as crazy in regard to rum and tobacco as in regard to slavery. Some of them refrain from eating flesh and drinking tea and coffee. . . . They do not embrace these newfangled notions as Abolitionists, but their one fanaticism leads to another, and they are getting to be monomaniacs, as the Rev. Brother Purchard calls us, on every subject."

But Greeley was naturally a politician, and his early editorial career educated him in the belief that, in a republic, political parties must be the means through which polit-

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ical reforms must be accomplished. His one political idol, Henry Clay, was a slaveholder, and his zeal in Clay's behalf, while the Kentuckian was a presidential possibility, as well as his devotion to a protective tariff, assisted in securing his acceptance of slavery as it existed, so long as the South was not actively striving to extend the slave power.

Moreover, Greeley classed himself as a conservative, and some of his definitions of that term further explain his attitude toward the Abolitionists. Defining in his autobiography Clay's position as a slaveholder, he wrote: "He was a conservative in the true sense of that word—satisfied to hold by the present until he could see clearly how to exchange it for the better." "Radicalism," he said in a lecture, "is the tornado, the earthquake, which comes, acts, and is gone for a century. Conservatism is the granite, which may be chipped away here and there to build a new house or let a railroad pass, but which will substantially abide forever." The Abolitionists, of whom Garrison was the leading exponent, were radicals of the most ultra type. Not only did they demand the immediate emancipation of all slaves, but they pronounced the compact between North and South which countenanced slavery, "a cove-

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nant with death and an agreement with hell," and refused to vote for any public officer under it, no matter how strongly the platform on which he stood opposed slavery; and they declared, in the language of the *Liberator*, that "if the bodies and souls of millions of rational beings must be sacrificed as the price of the Union, better, far better, that a separation took place." Of the constitution of the Non-resistance Society, whose tenet was that no man or government has the right to take the life of a man on any pretext, drawn by a committee of which he was chairman, Garrison wrote: "It swept the whole surface of society, and upturned almost every existing institution on earth," one plank opposing the completion of the Bunker Hill monument. Many Abolitionists did not, it is true, follow the Garrisonians in their extreme views, and Giddings and Chase took part in the Free Soil convention of 1848 which nominated Van Buren for President; but it was the radicals who were the type in the public eye.

Greeley was a boy ten years old when the Missouri compromise was adopted by Congress in 1821. Under that compromise the slavery question remained quiescent for many years. Slavery had not long been abolished in all the Northern States, and it ex-

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isted in the Southern States by permission of the Constitution, which specifically required that slaves escaping into another State should be delivered up. The few Abolitionists who were then declaiming against this constitutional status were tolerated even in the North solely because of their insignificance. "Had it been imagined," says Greeley, "that the permanence of slavery was endangered by their efforts, they would scarcely have escaped with their lives from any city or considerable village wherein they attempted to hold forth." Greeley's own position, during the years of quiescence, he thus explained in his autobiography: "Slavery, as a local institution, was primarily the business of the States which saw fit to uphold it. . . . Only when it sought to involve us in a common effort, a common responsibility, with its upholders and champions, did it force us into an attitude of active, determined antagonism."

While he could not withhold from the Abolitionists "a certain measure of sympathy for their great and good object," he failed to see how they were assisting to secure the end in view—how the conversion of all the people of Vermont to Abolitionism would overthrow slavery in Georgia. Hence, "con-

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servative by instinct, by tradition, and disinclined to reject or leave undone the practical good within reach, while straining after the ideal good that was clearly unattainable, I clung fondly to the Whig party, and deprecated the Abolition, or third, party in politics, as calculated fatally to weaken the only great national organization which was likely to oppose an effective resistance to the persistent exactions and aggressions of the slave power." But before this was written, Greeley had witnessed the death of the Whig party, because it did *not* make its resistance effective, and had read, if not written, in the Tribune (November 24, 1847): "As to the Abolition party, its movements and fulminations have doubtless had the evil effect observed by Mr. Clay, of irritating and alarming the masters generally, and rendering most of them impervious to the arguments for emancipation. But, on the other hand, their efforts have served to awaken and fix public attention, and, though their immediate influence has been unfavorable, we are not sure that the existence of slavery has been protracted by their labors as a whole."

The vastness of the task required of those who were to educate public opinion in the Northern States to accept slavery as a moral

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wrong, and thus to array itself against slavery extension, can be understood by an examination of the popular opinion on the subject in the years following the Missouri compromise. For many of these years the opposition, not only to antislavery agitation, but to negro education and any approach to negro equality, was quite as strong in the Northern States as it was below Mason and Dixon's line. The Liberator, in its salutatory, said that "a greater revolution was to be effected in the Free States—and particularly in New England—than at the South. I [Garrison] found contempt more bitter, opposition more active, detraction more relentless, prejudice more stubborn and apathy more frozen than among slaveholders themselves."

The list of antislavery societies in the United States in 1826 shows that there were none in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, or Connecticut, and only one each in Rhode Island and New York, while there were forty-one in North Carolina, twenty-three in Tennessee, four in Maryland, and two in Virginia. Edward Everett Hale recollects when black boys were not, except on one day, allowed by the bigger white boys to have the freedom of Boston Common; and

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when he was graduated from Harvard College in 1839, William Francis Channing was the only one of his classmates who would have allowed himself to be called an Abolitionist. When, in October, 1835, the Female Antislavery Society of Boston proposed to hold a public meeting, at which an address would be made by George Thompson, an eloquent assailant of slavery, handbills were circulated announcing that a purse of \$100 had been raised by patriotic citizens "to reward the individual who shall first lay violent hands on Thompson so that he may be brought to the tar-kettle before dark. Friends of the Union, be vigilant!" and the meeting was broken up by a mob which the mayor confessed himself unable to control. A meeting of Abolitionists in Philadelphia, on July 4, 1834, was made the occasion of mob violence, in which Lewis Tappen's house was gutted, and other buildings, including churches, were damaged, and unoffending negroes were assaulted in the streets; these disorders continued for several days, and extended into New Jersey.

The public animosity shown to the Abolitionists in the North was quite as determined against any attempt to better the condition of negroes. The "Jim Crow" cars of



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the Southern States to-day were common on Massachusetts railroads in 1840, and Higginson remembers when a colored woman was put out of an omnibus near Cambridge Common. When, in 1831, it was proposed by the free people of color to establish a school on the manual labor plan, and New Haven, Conn., was selected as its site, a meeting of citizens there resolved to resist it by every lawful means. Because of the admission of colored students to Noyes's Academy, at Canaan, N. H., in 1835, three hundred men and one hundred yokes of oxen moved the building from its foundation. When Miss Crandall, a Quakeress, advertised in 1832 that colored pupils would be admitted to her school in Canterbury, Conn., a town meeting was called to abate "the nuisance," and the town authorities induced the Legislature to pass an act forbidding any school in the State for the education of colored persons not residents of the State, without the consent of the selectmen. When Miss Crandall persisted in teaching her colored pupils, she was arrested and confined overnight in a cell whose last occupant had been a murderer. Failing to secure her conviction, her neighbors, in 1834, first tried to burn her house, and later so nearly demolished it with stones and clubs

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that it was left uninhabitable. It was twenty years later than this that Boston witnessed the scenes which accompanied the surrender of Anthony Burns. In 1835 the notes of a clergyman who tried to preach against slavery in Worcester, Mass., were torn up; an academy in Concord, N. H., was demolished because colored pupils were admitted; a clergyman was arrested in the same State while delivering an antislavery lecture, and sentenced to three months' imprisonment as a disorderly person; and in 1834 an antislavery celebration in the Chatham Street chapel in New York city was broken up, and three days' rioting followed.

The most potent agent that could have been enlisted in the work of changing this public opinion, and building up a bulwark against slavery extension, was a newspaper that was *not* affiliated with the radicals, that *was* the leading mouthpiece (Greeley said it was not the organ) of one of the controlling political parties of the day, that was edited by a man who possessed in a large degree the confidence of his readers, and that had a circulation which gave his words a wide hearing. This matter of circulation is an important one in gaging the Tribune's part in the overthrow of slavery. The Abolition jour-

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nals, aside from the fact that they addressed, for the most part, readers who were already convinced, addressed few of these. Garrison's *Liberator* had only between 150 and 2,500 subscribers during its entire career, and the *National Antislavery Standard*, whose paying circulation in 1846 was 1,400, was kept alive by annual bazaars. The *Tribune's* circulation grew with the intensity of its anti-slavery views, and in January, 1854, it had a circulation of 96,000 for its weekly, and of 130,000 for its total issues. How Horace Greeley led on his readers, step by step, to face the great issue, we may now learn from the words he addressed to them.

When conducting the *New Yorker*, in 1834, Greeley, while believing slavery "to be at the bottom of most of the evils which affect the communities of the South," accepted and defended the right to be let alone, as regards this question, for which the South was contending. His paper said in July of that year: "The Union was formed with a perfect knowledge, on the one hand, that slavery existed in the South, and, on the other, it was utterly disapproved and discountenanced at the North. But the framers of the Constitution saw no reason for distrust and dissension in this circumstance. Wisely avoiding

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all discussion of a subject so delicate and exciting, they proceeded to the formation of 'a more perfect union,' which, leaving each section in possession of its undoubted right of regulating its own internal government and enjoying its own speculative opinions, provided only for the common benefit and mutual well-being of the whole. And why should not this arrangement be satisfactory and perfect? Why should not even the existing evils of one section be left to the correction of its own wisdom and experience when pointed out by the unerring finger of experience?"

The New Yorker supplies expressions of the editor's views of the agitation stirred up by the Abolitionists. On May 21, 1836, condemning an attack on an antislavery convention at Granville, Ohio, it expressed a hope that, on the next occasion of this kind, "the real and substantial opponents of the antislavery agitation" would repress the mob pretending to act in their behalf, and said: "It is quite enough to have some hundreds of Abolitionist declaimers exciting the public mind with regard to this subject, without obliging us to look with complaisance on such suicidal outrages committed in the name of the cause of moderation, right, reason, and the compromises of the Constitution." In

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May, 1838, referring to antiabolition riots in Philadelphia which resulted in the burning of Penn Hall, it said, "The Abolitionists, we doubt not, would like the fun of having their hall burned every year, and their chance to make ten or twenty thousand converts out of the outrage and excitement. Let no one suppose us inclined to treat such criminal outrages with levity. Such humors of the body politic should be corrected by an application of grape and canister."

Greeley says in his autobiography that the two events which "materially modified" his preconceptions of the slavery question were the attempts of the South to annex Texas, and the killing of Elijah P. Lovejoy at Alton, Ill., in 1837, because he insisted on publishing there a religious newspaper which condemned slavery as one of the evils opposed to godliness. The New Yorker of November 25 in that year contained an editorial two columns long giving an account of the murder, and saying:

"We dare not trust ourselves to speak of this shocking affair in the language which our indignation would dictate. It forms one of the foulest blots on the page of American history. . . . We loathe and abhor the miserable cant of those who talk of Mr. Lovejoy as

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guilty of 'resisting public opinion.' Public opinion, forsooth! What right have five hundred or five thousand to interfere with the lawful expression of a freeman's sentiments because they happen to number more than those who think with him? We spurn the base tyranny—this utter denial of all rights save as the tender mercies of a mob shall vouchsafe them. . . . Lovejoy's errors, or those of Abolitionists generally, have nothing to do in any shape with the turpitude of this outrage."

This protest was uttered when the Boston authorities were refusing the Rev. Dr. Channing the use of Faneuil Hall in which to hold a meeting to condemn Lovejoy's murder, and when the Attorney-General of Massachusetts was declaring on the platform that Lovejoy died as the fool dieth, and that his murderers stood for what the men stood who threw the tea into Boston harbor!

The Texas question played so important a part in the antislavery contest that a brief summary of the events involved is necessary to an understanding of Greeley's attitude. Americans who had received grants of land in Texas from Mexico adopted a constitution in 1833, and in 1836 declared their independence. The massacre of the Alamo, avenged

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in the battle of San Jacinto, followed. The constitution of the independent State of Texas gave its sanction to the institution of slavery, which was contrary to the law of Mexico, and the news of the victory at San Jacinto was received with joy in the Southern States, from which petitions were sent to Congress asking for the recognition of Texan independence. Webster held that our Government ought to recognize a *de facto* government in Texas, if one had been established, and Clay reported a resolution acknowledging that obligation whenever our Government received satisfactory information that such a government was in operation, and his resolution was adopted by both Houses. Meanwhile, claims against the Mexican Government, made by Americans, were piling up and were disregarded. In December, 1836, the United States *chargé d'affaires* at the city of Mexico asked for his passports and departed, and in February, 1837, President Jackson, who had tried in vain to purchase Texas of Mexico, in a special message to Congress asked for power to make reprisals if the Mexican Government refused to meet its obligations.

Webster made a speech in Niblo's Garden, New York city, on March 15, 1837, which, in

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Greeley's view, expressed "the more considerate Northern view of the [Texas annexation] subject" at that time. In that speech he said:

"On the general question of slavery a great portion of the community is already strongly excited. The subject has not only attracted attention as a question of politics, but it has started a far deeper-toned chord. It has arrested the religious feeling of the country; it has taken strong hold on the consciences of men. He is a rash man, indeed, and little conversant with human nature, and especially has he a very erroneous estimate of the character of the people of this country, who supposes that a feeling of this kind is to be trifled with or despised. It will assuredly cause itself to be respected. It may be reasoned with; it may be made willing—I believe it is entirely willing—to fulfil all existing engagements and all existing duties, to uphold and defend the Constitution as it is established, with whatever regrets about some provisions which it does actually contain. But to coerce it into silence, to endeavor to restrain it from expression, to seek to compress and confine it, warm as it is, and more heated as such endeavors would inevitably render it—should this be attempted, I know



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nothing, not even in the Constitution or in the Union itself, which would not be endangered by the explosion which might follow."

President Van Buren in his message of December, 1837, informed Congress of his failure to adjust the American claims. The Texas Government had proposed annexation to our Government in August of that year, but Van Buren refused to entertain a proposition that was certain to involve us in a war with Mexico. This action of Texas aroused the country. The Legislatures of eight Northern States made formal protests against annexation, and Senator Preston, of South Carolina, offered a resolution favoring it, but no direct issue was reached. Van Buren continued attempts to secure a settlement with Mexico, and in 1839, by means of a treaty, the matter was referred to the King of Prussia as arbitrator; but when the time at which the arrangement was to expire (1842) arrived, many claims remained unsettled. It was charged then that these claims were allowed to remain unadjusted in order to keep the Texas question open.

Tyler's elevation to the presidency, through the death of Harrison, gave the country an executive who was ready to make Texas annexation a part of his policy, no

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matter how the party that had elected him viewed the matter. Six months after his inauguration he hinted to Webster the possibility of securing Texas by treaty, and asked, "Could the North be reconciled to it? Slavery—I know that is the objection, and it would be well founded if it did not already exist among us." But when, in March, 1842, Texas made another offer of annexation, Webster strongly opposed it, and in May, 1843, he left the Cabinet—too late to escape the criticisms of his warmest party friends. The new Secretary of State—Upshur, of Virginia—was a strong annexationist, and the administration began at once secretly to take steps to carry out its policy. The elections of 1842 had given the Democrats a big majority in the House, but the Senate had to be reckoned with in securing the ratification of an annexation treaty. The administration made a direct proposal of such a treaty to Texas, and, after the Texas Government had received from the United States' diplomatic agent an assurance that no power would be permitted by the United States to invade Texas territory because of such a treaty, an envoy from Texas was sent to Washington to complete the negotiations. Before his arrival Upshur had been killed by the explosion on

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the frigate Princeton; in March, 1844, Calhoun took his place; and on April 12 the treaty was signed and ten days later sent to the Senate, where, on June 8, it was defeated by a vote of sixteen yeas to thirty-five nays. Tyler at once, in a special message, urged the House to secure annexation by "some other form of proceeding," but Congress adjourned without carrying out the scheme.

The year 1844 was a presidential year, and the most probable candidates for the heads of the two tickets were Clay and Van Buren. Both of these leaders looked on the Texas question as a dangerous one, and two years earlier, when Van Buren visited Clay at Ashland, it was said that they had agreed to place themselves in opposition to annexation. Clay found himself forced to define his position before the Whig convention met, and he did so in his "Raleigh letter" of April 17. In this he stated his belief that any title to Texas which our Government had received under the Louisiana purchase had been ceded to Spain by subsequent treaty; that the United States should not go to war with Mexico to secure Texas, and that he was not in favor of acquiring new territory simply to maintain a balance of power between the North and South. Van Buren also wrote a

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letter, in which he did not admit the constitutionality of acquiring Texas by treaty, and pointed out that annexation meant war with Mexico, but said that he was not to be "influenced by local or sectional feelings" in dealing with such a question as slavery. Clay's nomination followed, but Van Buren was thrown over by the Democrats for Polk, although he had a majority on the first ballot, a resolution requiring a two-thirds vote to nominate having been carried. Some Abolitionists, under the name of the Liberty party, had in August, 1843, nominated James G. Birney as their candidate.

Greeley was educated by the Texas controversy step by step. The New Yorker in October, 1836, opposed annexation as likely to cause a revival of the slavery controversy "so happily adjusted" by the Missouri compromise. On February 18, 1837, announcing the vote of the House denying to slaves the right of petition, it expressed a hope that thus "the Abolition question, which has so considerably misimproved the time and temper of the House of Representatives, was put to rest, we trust, for the remainder of the session." On the twenty-third of December following, it headed an account of the excitement in Congress over the presentation of

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petitions for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, "By our latest advices from Washington we learn that the event which we have long anticipated—a disruption of the ties which bind us together as a nation, through the influence of the Abolition question—seems on the brink of occurrence."

Before the Tribune was a year old its editor's patience was tried by a decision of the United States Supreme Court (*Prigg vs. Pennsylvania*) that the right of a slaveholder to capture a fugitive slave anywhere was absolute, State laws to the contrary notwithstanding, and it said, "The effect of this decision will be to deepen the impression on the public mind that the existence of slavery for some is inconsistent with, and fatal to, the preservation of perfect freedom for any."

Greeley's greatest effort in behalf of a presidential candidate was made for Clay, whose name he had kept at the head of his editorial page throughout 1843, and for whose election he labored the next year as he never labored again. Clay's status as a slaveowner was the subject of attacks (which the Tribune called "a foul conspiracy") by the Democrats and the Liberty men, both before and after his nomination, and on January 16,

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1843, the Tribune stated its own view of the matter thus:

“Let no one pervert our position. We do not say the citizens of the free States have no means, no power, no right to act adversely upon slavery. They have means and powers which existed antecedently to the Constitution, and were not affected by it. The right to speak and write and labor, as men, against any moral wrong, is anterior (might we not say superior) to all government. . . . We can excuse the thoroughgoing Abolitionist who, declaring the Constitution an iniquitous compact, refuses to vote or exercise any franchise under it. But he who uses the power granted by the Constitution in violation of its essential conditions, is guilty of a deep and moral wrong. . . . To abandon Clay on such [slavery] grounds would be a breach of faith to the Whigs, and treason to the Constitution.”

After the nominations were made the Tribune defended Polk in the same way.

Greeley's early objection to the annexation of Texas was based on the view that it would be a glaring assumption of Federal power, rather than that it would furnish new territory to slavery; and after Clay's nomination the Tribune (May 16, 1844) “depre-

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cated, for reasons of policy, any Northern commingling of the questions of annexation and slavery for the present." In other words, Greeley as well as Clay would have been glad to keep the slavery question out of the pending campaign. But Tyler's Texas scheme so aroused the editor's indignation that no question of "policy" could quiet his "abhorrence" of the President, whose impeachment for moving troops to the Sabine he suggested. When warned of the effect of its opposition to annexation on the Whig ticket, the Tribune (June 12), while conceding that the annexation question would cause Clay to lose Louisiana, and make Georgia and Tennessee very close, replied, "Nay, friends, we always say what we think when we speak at all." The slavery question was, however, "commingled" with Texas annexation, and Greeley was soon forced to recognize this, and to change his front. This he did in an editorial on August 31, in which he thus expressed himself:

"We see in this Texas iniquity, from its first secret and fraudulent inception in Tennessee and at the White House ten years ago to its present maturity, a conspiracy to circumvent 'the inevitable laws of population,' and thereby secure a prolonged and unnatural

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duration of slavery. To this conspiracy the free States can not become parties, even by a skulking connivance, without fearful guilt. They ought to have taken their stand against any extension of their responsibility for slavery when Louisiana was acquired, but they neglected it, and thereby prolonged the existence of slavery in the Union at least half a century."

On November 28, following Clay's defeat, the Tribune set forth its views on Texas and slavery in an editorial nearly two columns long. Still deprecating all sectional agitation, it reaffirmed its belief that the Government had no right to meddle with slavery in the existing slave States, but the danger of the disposition of those States to grasp for power was indicated, and its summing up (with its own italics) was as follows: "Briefly, then, we stand on the ground of *Opposition to the Annexation of Texas so long as a vestige of slavery shall remain within her borders.*" This marked the throwing down of the Tribune's gantlet to the slave power.

The Texas annexation resolution passed the House on January 25, 1845 (with the aid of eight Southern Whig votes, twenty-seven Democrats voting nay), and the Senate on February 27 (three Whigs voting yea). The



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Tribune's comment was: "The mischief is done, and we are now involved in war. We have adopted a war ready-made, and taken upon ourselves its prosecution to the end." It was not ready, however, to join the Abolitionists, and when a Western Whig journal proposed, in the following spring, that the party raise the standard of emancipation, it declared that, for itself, it should continue to act in good faith with all, North and South, who supported Whig principles; "if we shall ever feel that this is no longer possible, the Federal Union will for us exist no longer."

Greeley was a zealous advocate of Clay's nomination as the Whig presidential candidate again in 1848, while conceding that it was just that the head of the Whig ticket should be a citizen of a free State, and he came home from the convention cast down. The convention had given the nomination to General Taylor, and had laid on the table and refused to vote on a resolution pledging the delegates "to abide the nomination with the understanding that the nominee, in good faith, accepts of it, and adheres to the great principles of the Whig party—no extension of slavery, and in favor of American industry." Greeley had stated in advance his ob-

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jections to General Taylor—the fact that his views on public questions were not known, that he was supported as a slave-owner, and that his election would stimulate the war spirit, and set a bad example to young men. He did not place the ticket at the head of the Tribune's columns, but in a long editorial reviewed the situation, and said: "We shall take time for reflection. If it shall appear to us that the support of General Taylor is the only course by which the election of Cass can be prevented, we shall feel bound to concur in that support." The Free-soil Democrats called a convention to meet in Buffalo on August 9, and on July 31 the Tribune restated its objections to Taylor, and refused to come out for him until the Buffalo convention and the August elections made it certain that Taylor or Cass must be chosen. On June 27 a Taylor ratification meeting was held in New York city, which adopted the following among other resolutions:

"Resolved, That we deprecate sectional issues in a national canvass, as dangerous to the Union and injurious to the public good; that we look with confidence to a Whig administration to remove all causes for such issues, and that we will countenance no faction of the Whig party, and no coalition with any

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faction out of it, which shall threaten to array one section of our common country in angry hostility against another."

This was the voice of those Northern "business interests" which gave so much encouragement to the slave power, and Greeley seized the opportunity to rebuke it. The Tribune the next day declared that the simple meaning of the resolution was that "strenuous and consistent hostility to the extension of slavery is factious," and continued:

"Gentlemen of Wall Street, and sharp, shrewd calculators generally! be entreated to understand this matter aright. The hearts of the people are fully set in them to stop the passage of the Rio Grande by Human Slavery, and they will not be turned aside. They may be cajoled, deluded, and betrayed; but if they shall be, then woe to their betrayers. The Whigs of the North want to vote with their party, for President and all, if they can do so without voting to favor the extension of slavery, and that you must not ask them to do unless you wish to upset your dish altogether. . . . Over and over again this State has said, through her Legislature and her delegation in Congress, 'There must be no planting of slavery on free soil.' Do you

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think you can stifle this by your babble of 'faction' and 'sectional issues'?"

Of the Van Buren-Adams ticket, nominated at Buffalo, it said that it presumed that that ticket would receive the votes of nearly all who regarded resistance to slavery extension as the paramount duty of the day, and indicated that it was among those so defined by declaring that, while it did not lose sight of the importance of the protection of home industries, internal improvements, a sound financial policy, etc., it deemed "the limitation of slavery to its present legal domain more imminent than any or all of them." It gave more attention to Irish than American politics in August and September; but the Whig hold on Greeley was a strong one, and at a meeting in Vauxhall on September 27 he confessed his belief that only by supporting Taylor could Cass be defeated, and the Taylor ticket appeared on his editorial page two days later. He never, however, became enthusiastic over the candidate, and, writing from Washington to the Tribune about the inauguration ball, he said: "Had the dancing part of my education been less shockingly neglected, I should not have felt like dancing now."

While a member of Congress (Greeley

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was elected that year) he took every opportunity to oppose the slave power. He did not obtain the floor to speak in favor of the resolution (which was passed) declaring the traffic in human beings as chattels in Washington "a notorious reproach to our country throughout Christendom," and directing the reporting of a bill prohibiting the slave-trade in the District of Columbia, but he wrote to the Tribune, "I could have wished that it had occurred on Forefathers' Day; but perhaps it is better as it is. The sons of the Pilgrims throughout the Union, as they assemble tomorrow to celebrate their fathers' landing on these shores, may greet each other on the decision of to-day." He opposed the introduction of slavery in New Mexico, and, when it was proposed to refer the Texas boundary question to the United States Supreme Court, he objected on the ground that a majority of the court were slave-owners.

The next great slavery contest that engaged the attention of the country was over the famous Clay "Compromise of 1850." In his autobiography Greeley says, "Mr. Clay's proffer seemed to me candid and fair to the North, so far as it related to the newly acquired territories." But even this guarded statement does not give a fair presentation

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of Greeley's part in this struggle. He did *not* accept any part of the compromise at the start. He announced open rebellion against his old leader's position. He repudiated the argument of Webster in the 7th of March speech. He did ally himself, later in the contest, with the compromisers, but only to find that the so-called compromise was an apple of discord, which did as much as anything else preceding the war to arouse Northern opinion, make clear the aim of the slave power, and elect an antislavery President.

Clay's compromise and Webster's famous speech had their origin in the fear that the South would attempt to destroy the Union, and Henry Wilson almost excuses Webster in view of the picture which the orator drew of the conflict that such an attempt would incite. The South had been growing more and more restless under the continued opposition to the introduction of slavery in California and New Mexico, the activity of the Northern Abolitionists, and such an indication of the Northern temper as was seen in the vote concerning slavery in the District of Columbia. Greeley did not believe that the body politic in the South would ever mean disunion, and he was not to be coerced by the threats of what he considered to be the voice

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of only the actual slave-owners. With a speech by Calhoun in the Senate as a text, the Tribune said on June 29, 1848:

"Thanks to a kind providence, and the manly straightforwardness of John C. Calhoun, the great question of the extension or non-extension of human slavery under the flag of this republic is to be pressed to a decision now. . . . Human slavery is at deadly feud with the common law, the common sense, and the conscience of mankind; nobody pretends to justify it but those who share in its gains and its guilt. God, Man, Nature, Religion, Law, Reason, are all against it. . . . If the slavery propagandists are ready for the inevitable struggle, let no retreat be beaten by the champions of universal Freedom. The people are looking on." <sup>1</sup>

On December 23, 1848, a secret conference of the Senators and Representatives from the Southern States was held in the Senate cham-

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<sup>1</sup> The New York Evening Post, on January 4, 1850, charged that the editor of the Tribune, before he got home from Congress, was willing to divide the new territories with the slaveholders upon equitable terms. Greeley was out of town when this appeared, but on his return, in the Tribune of January 12, he made his oft-quoted reply: "You lie, villain! wilfully, wickedly, basely lie! The editor of the Tribune was *never* willing to divide the territories with the slaveholders on any terms whatever."

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ber, and, after a number of adjourned meetings, a long address to their constituents was adopted, a motion to table the subject being lost by a vote of yeas, 28; nays, 60. This address, after reviewing the constitutional provision concerning slavery, asserted the right of slave-owners to recover their slaves in free States, set forth the obstacles devised thereto and the existence of "secret combinations" in Northern States to induce slaves to escape; and complained of the "systematic agitation of the [slavery] question by the Abolitionists," which it pronounced "dangerous to the rights of the South, and subversive of one of the ends for which the Constitution was established." Regarding slavery in the Territories, it laid down this doctrine: "We ask not for the extension of slavery. . . . What we do insist on is that we shall not be prohibited from migrating, with our property, into the Territories of the United States because we are slaveholders." The enactments proposed in Congress to abolish slavery and the slave-trade in the District of Columbia were cited, and it was declared that these "measures of aggression" must be met. Finally, the address strenuously urged "united action" on the part of the South, closing thus: "As the assailed, you would stand jus-



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tified by all laws, human and divine, in repelling a blow so dangerous without looking to consequences, and to resort to all means necessary for that purpose. Your assailants, and not you, would be responsible for the consequences."

The proceedings of these caucuses were published on January 30, and the Tribune with them printed an editorial in which it asserted that nothing was ever "better adapted to the great work of arousing and fixing the North," and added: "Then, as to the other monstrous grievance, the free States—shamed into manhood by the Abolitionists of various species<sup>1</sup>—will not permit the extension of slavery. The vast regions that came to us free must remain so."

In October, 1849, a State convention in California adopted unanimously a constitution which excluded slavery, and this was ratified by the people by a vote of 12,066 to 811. At the instance of Mississippi, a convention of the Southern people was called to meet in Nashville, Tenn., in June, 1850, to deliberate on the threatened rights of the South, and

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<sup>1</sup> This was anticipatory of Lincoln's declaration: "I have been only the instrument. The logic and moral power of Garrison and the antislavery people of the country, and the army, have done all."

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talk of disunion became more wide-spread. In the North public opinion was quite as emphatic, and by July, 1849, the Legislature of every free State but Iowa had instructed its representatives in Congress to vote against the introduction of slavery in territories where it was not already authorized. In January, 1850, President Taylor recommended to Congress the admission of California.

On January 29 of that year Clay introduced his famous compromise resolutions. They favored the admission of California, and the establishment of territorial governments in lands acquired from Mexico, without any conditions as to slavery; declared it inexpedient to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, while it continued in Maryland, and without the consent of the people of the District, but opposed the slave-trade therein; pronounced in favor of a more efficient provision for the restitution of fugitive slaves, and asserted that Congress had no power to prohibit or abolish trade in slaves between slaveholding States.

The Tribune parted from its leader at once, and on January 31 compared Clay's effort to secure peace to the man who rushed between a fighting husband and wife, and was whipped by both. "No," it declared, "we are

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not yet ready for compromise on either side. Thus far our side has lost by compromise, and gained by struggles. We know well that Mr. Clay's heart is right, and that his views are temperate and far-seeing. But their adoption by the North as its own, in the present state of the case, is quite another affair." On February 1 it added to this protest, "To countermarch in the face of a determined and formidable foe is peril if not ruin. Our tower of strength and of safety is the Wilmot proviso." "Let the Union be a thousand times shivered," it said two weeks later, "rather than we should aid you to plant slavery on free soil."

Greeley devoted a column on March 9 to the notable speech of Daniel Webster made two days previous. The following citations will show his spirit:

"At such a crisis as the present there is no safe light but that of principle. He who tries to be guided by any other will err in the fruitless vague, or land his followers in the ditch. Expediency may debate the steps to be taken, but it must be principle that determines the end. . . . It takes courage to face an enemy in battle; it takes more courage to confront a great enemy in politics. . . . The position that Northern States and their

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citizens are morally bound to recapture fugitive slaves may be good for a lawyer, but it is not good for a man. . . . But the Union! Preserve the Union. . . . We say that it is not in danger! Thank God, it does not exist by the pleasure of politicians, but by an overruling necessity of things. It can not be dissolved. It is not only the enactment of Nature and God, but it is fortified by an admirable Constitution, by the whole power of the American people, and by the clear-headed, true-hearted, and strong-handed administration which now guides our destiny."

But Greeley abandoned the vital part of the views he had thus set forth. When, after a debate of three months, a bill, reported by a special committee of which Clay was chairman, and known as the "omnibus bill," containing the substance of Clay's resolutions, was reported, Greeley went to Washington, and in his correspondence with the Tribune classed himself among the compromisers. This bill was in itself a further compromise, as it omitted Clay's original declaration that "slavery does not exist by law." The Tribune even abandoned that "tower of strength and safety," the Wilmot proviso, saying on August 5: "Our opinion of the *propriety* and *legality* of the Wilmot proviso has not

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changed one hair, but the *necessity* for it is now far less than it has been. Give us California admitted, and territorial governments for New Mexico and Utah, and we will forego the Wilmot proviso, though we think we ought to have this and all the others besides."

Even the "omnibus bill" was a failure, and it seemed probable that no legislation on the subject would be secured. Then came the elevation of Fillmore to the presidency through Taylor's death, and after that Congress passed four separate bills, which Fillmore signed. The first of these admitted California as a free State. The second adjusted the Texas boundary, giving the State \$10,000,000 as an indemnity, and also organized New Mexico as a Territory, the State or States formed from which should be admitted "with or without slavery, as their constitutions may prescribe." The third bill amended the fugitive slave law of 1793 by providing new machinery for the capture of such slaves, and imposing a fine not exceeding \$1,000 and imprisonment for not more than six months on any one who obstructed the enforcement of the law, or concealed a fugitive. A fourth bill forbade the traffic in slaves in the District of Columbia.

The Tribune realized at once that the

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slave power had won in this great contest, and it refused to accept the result as a Whig victory. When, in October, it was proposed to hold in New York city a great meeting to indorse the peace measures, the Tribune said: "Forty Abolition meetings will not advance the antislavery sentiment so much as one grand mercantile city meeting to put down Free-soilism and make a finish of antislavery excitement." Greeley was not even to be won over by an appeal to the peril there might be to the tariff in Whig discord, and, replying to an article in the Richmond (Va.) Whig, he said: "If it [the Tribune] can only procure protection to the labor of New York by conspiring to rob the laborers of Virginia of their just earnings, it will spurn the bargain."

All that there was in the nature of pacifying compromise in the act of 1850 was overshadowed by the practical effect of the attempts to enforce the new fugitive slave law. Greeley early declared that the existence of this law might be "endured" so long as it was rarely enforced, "but no longer," and he openly expressed his sympathy with every effort made in the North to obstruct it. When a "Union and Safety Committee," representing "commercial interests" in New

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York city, in September, 1851, circulated a petition declaring that a further agitation of the slavery question would be "fraught with incalculable danger to our Union," and urging that no one should vote for a Congressional candidate opposed to the new peace measures, the Tribune vigorously opposed this pledge, and on November 6 it thus restated its position:

"For our own part, living within the very shadow of the temple wherein the god Cotton is worshiped, we defy the priests who officiate at the altar to do their worst. We tell them that from the depths of our soul we hate and abhor human slavery, and every institution, law, or usage whereby the poor and feeble are racked and lashed to make them minister to the pomp and luxury of the wealthy and powerful. We tell them that we feel that the soil we tread is desecrated, the air we breathe polluted, by the inhuman slave-hunts which an ill-considered compact, made when our fathers were themselves virtually slaveholders, compels us not to oppose by any other than a moral resistance. We tell them that *we will not* be instrumental in forcing back into bondage those who have escaped therefrom; but, while we would dissuade all from violent resistance to any legal

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mandate, we will ourselves cheerfully go to prison, or bear any penalty which our refusal may invoke, rather than aid to consign an innocent fellow being to perpetual bondage."

The Tribune favored the nomination of General Scott for President in 1852, but said of the declaration of the Whig platform in favor of the compromise of 1850, and deprecating further agitation of the slave question, "If there be any five thousand Whigs whose voting for the Whig candidate depends on our agreeing not to speak in reprehension of slavery, or our agreeing to give any 'aid and comfort' to the hunting and catching of fugitive slaves, they may as well take up their beds and walk, for we mean to stay in the Whig party, and *not* to keep silence about slavery, nor 'acquiesce' in fugitive-slave hunting. So if *this* is to drive Whigs into the Loco-foco camp, they may as well go now as any time."

Of the result of this campaign Greeley said in his autobiography, "The Whig party had been often beaten before; this defeat proved it practically defunct, and in an advanced stage of decomposition."

On January 4, 1854, Stephen A. Douglas reported to the Senate, with amendments, a bill introduced by Dodge, of Iowa, to organ-



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ize the Territory of Nebraska. This was the practical beginning of the contest known in our history as the Kansas-Nebraska struggle. Douglas's report set forth that the compromise measures of 1850 rested on the principle that all questions pertaining to slavery in the Territories, and the States formed from them, were to be decided by the people thereof, and his bill provided that Nebraska, when admitted, should be received with or without slavery, as its constitution should provide.

The Tribune attacked this position at once, spoke of Douglas as "down on his marrow-bones at the feet of slavery," and added:

"Although antislavery is weak in political circles, it was never stronger with the masses of the people. The great heart of the country is sound. Thousands and millions of true men all over the North wait but the occasion for a practical demonstration of their power, to show how firm is their attachment to the principle of freedom, and how deeply they scorn the shallow fools who have the impertinence to talk about 'crushing out' those principles."

The Tribune fought the proposed legislation step by step, but in vain, and when the bill passed the House (after midnight on May 23), it said "The revolution is accomplished,

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and slavery is king. How long shall this monarch reign? This is now the question for the Northern people to answer. . . . Conspiracy has done its worst. Treason has done its worst. Who comes to the rescue? . . . Perhaps some such gigantic outrage upon the living sentiment of the North as the defeat of the Missouri compromise was necessary to arouse and consolidate the hosts of freedom in the free States."

The Kansas-Nebraska question created a new alinement of parties. Greeley credited Douglas and Pierce with having made more Abolitionists in three months than Garrison and Phillips could have made in fifty years. The purpose of the slave power was rendered clearer, and the Northern determination to resist it was strengthened. The Tribune's files are a sufficient demonstration of the part it took in the formation of the new Northern sentiment, and Greeley's willingness to accept the compromise measures when they were in process of formation increased his authority when he interpreted the actual result. Now Whigs like Greeley and Seward, Free-soilers like Sumner and Chase, Abolitionists like Owen Lovejoy and Giddings, and Democrats like Trumbull and Blair saw a common ground on which they could fight

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under the same banner; and on this ground the foundation of the new Republican party was laid in 1854. Henry Wilson says:

“At the outset, Mr. Greeley was hopeless, and seemed disinclined to enter upon the contest. So often defeated by Northern defection therein, he distrusted Congress, nor had he faith that the people would reverse the verdict of their representatives. He told his associates that he would not restrain them, but, as for himself, he had no heart for the strife. But they were more hopeful. . . . Even Mr. Greeley himself became inspired by the growing enthusiasm, and some of the most trenchant articles were from his practised and powerful pen.”<sup>1</sup>

Greeley was in Washington during the contest which, in 1855-'56, resulted finally in the election of N. P. Banks, of Massachusetts, as Speaker of the House. While the outcome was uncertain, Albert Rust, of Arkansas, introduced a resolution declaring it the sentiment of the House that Banks (who lacked only three or four votes of election) and the three other leading candidates should forbid the use of their names any longer. Greeley considered this attempt to dictate to the

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<sup>1</sup> Rise and Fall of the Slave Power, ii, p. 407.

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House a gross outrage, and called it, in his correspondence with the Tribune, "a more discreditable proposition than I had ever known gravely submitted to a legislative body." Thereupon Rust, on January 23, struck Greeley several blows with his fist as the editor was walking through the Capitol grounds, and repeated the assault when Greeley came up with him on his way to his hotel, breaking a cane over his critic's arm and inflicting on him a severe bruise. Greeley refused to prosecute his assailant, saying that he "did not choose to be beaten for money," and that he did not think an antislavery editor could get justice in a Washington court.

It was in 1856 also that the Tribune was indicted in Harrison County, Virginia, on a charge of publishing in New York, and circulating in Virginia, a newspaper which incited negroes to insurrection, and "inculcated resistance to the rights of property of masters in their slaves"; and its agent there was indicted for getting up a club of the paper. Neither indictment ever came to trial.

After the nomination of Frémont for President, in 1856, the Tribune conceded that the odds were greatly in favor of the Democrats, and in announcing his defeat it said, "We have lost a battle. The Bunker Hill of

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the new struggle for freedom is past; the Saratoga and Yorktown are yet to be achieved."

The great political events between the presidential years 1856 and 1860 were the Dred Scott decision in 1857, allowing slaveholders to take their slaves into the Territories; the Lecompton (Kan.) contest in Congress, and the Lincoln-Douglas debate in 1858, and John Brown's raid in Virginia in 1859. The Tribune held that Taney's decision was "entitled to just so much moral weight as would be the judgment of a majority of those congregated in any Washington bar-room"; it fought for free Kansas, and of the John Brown incident it said:

"There will be enough to heap execration on the memory of these mistaken men. We leave this work to the fit hands and tongues of those who regard the fundamental axioms of the Declaration of Independence as 'glittering generalities.' Believing that the way to universal emancipation lies not through insurrection, civil war, and bloodshed, but through peace, discussion, and the quiet diffusion of sentiments of humanity and justice, we deeply regret this outbreak. But, remembering that, if their fault was grievous, grievously have they answered it, we will not

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by one reproachful word disturb the bloody shrouds wherein John Brown and his compatriots are sleeping. They dared and died for what they felt to be the right, though in a manner which seems to us fatally wrong. Let their epitaphs remain unwritten until the not distant day when no slave shall clank his chains in the shades of Monticello or by the groves of Mt. Vernon."

## CHAPTER VIII

### DURING THE CIVIL WAR

ONE who has followed Greeley's course in opposition to the slave power after 1850 might expect to find him an aggressive leader in the contest when his desire to see in the presidential chair a resident of a free State elected by Free-soilers was gratified, and when that decision of the people was met by threats of breaking up the Union. But Greeley was, in fact, neither far-seeing in things political nor aggressive in the face of actual danger, and when aggressiveness counted most. He lacked that more exacting courage required "to confront a great enemy in politics" for which he had expressed admiration while the Compromise of 1850 was pending. Combined with this was distrust of Lincoln and his official advisers, a constant inclination during the war to obtrude his advice and his services where they could only cause annoyance and do harm, and a weakness of judgment in essential matters—all of which

## During the Civil War

seemed to justify Garrison in characterizing him as "the worst of all counselors, the most unsteady of all leaders, the most pliant of all compromisers in times of great public emergency."

To understand clearly Greeley's conduct during Lincoln's administration it is necessary to retrace our steps in presenting the narrative of his career.

What might be called the foundation principle of Greeley's early idea of journalism was independence of thought, and in the Log Cabin he laid down this very correct view of editorial office-holding:

"If the administration has resolved that no individual shall be appointed to any office as a reward for any real or imaginary service to the Whig cause as a partizan editor, and that the holding of office under the Federal Government and the editing of a partizan newspaper at the same time are incompatible, we do not hesitate to say that it has made a wise and beneficent decision."

By 1849 he had so far modified this view that he wrote (May 5): "We trust editors will not come to regard office as a goal and recompense for their labors, but that they will not, on the other hand, be deemed ineligible by reason of their calling." Then he



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became ambitious to hold an office himself. To one who realizes the power that he possessed as an editor, it may seem strange that he should be willing to devote to public affairs any of the time that his editorial duties demanded, or that he should come to believe that a public office would add to his popular repute. But most of the big men in politics in those days did receive political rewards. Weed, it is true, was content to pull the wires—accepting only the position of State Printer; but Seward had been Governor and was a United States Senator; Greeley had helped elect scores of men to Congress and to the Legislature, and in the opposition party in his own State he had seen Van Buren, Marcy, and Silas Wright honored with one important office after another. So he came to feel that he was left neglected in his editorial room, and in 1854 he approached Weed with the query whether “the time and circumstances” were not favorable for his nomination for Governor. The Tribune had for some years been advocating the adoption of the Maine prohibition law in New York State,<sup>1</sup> and

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<sup>1</sup> As a city excise measure Greeley proposed in 1844 to abolish all license fees, and assess on the sellers of liquor, retail and wholesale, the carefully ascertained cost of the pauperism caused by rum.

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Greeley was then classed among the ultra-prohibitionists. Weed's reply was that, although he was ready to admit that Greeley in the Tribune had educated the people up to the acceptance of his own temperance views for the State, the Weed men could not control the nomination, and that, while Greeley had shaken the temperance bush, Myron H. Clark was the man who would catch the bird. Greeley acquiesced in this opinion, but he soon after went to Albany and asked Weed if there was any objection to his running for Lieutenant-Governor. This request was a fair illustration of Greeley's ignorance of the practical side of politics, and Weed was obliged to point out to him how impolitic it would be to make up a ticket with two ultra-temperance men at its head. Again Greeley acquiesced, but when the convention resulted in the nomination of his rival, Henry J. Raymond, for Lieutenant-Governor, he was so exasperated that he held Weed responsible for Raymond's nomination, and accused Weed of concealing his intention in his conversation with him.<sup>1</sup>

Late in that campaign Greeley wrote to Seward that he wanted "an earnest talk"

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<sup>1</sup> Weed's Autobiography, ii, p. 227.

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with him as soon as the election was over, adding: "I have held in as long as I can, or shall have by that time. . . . I have tried to talk to Weed, but with only partial success. Weed likes me and always did—I don't think he ever had a dog about his house he likes better—but he thinks I know nothing about politics. If there are any plans for the future I want to know what they are, and if there are none, I want to know that fact, and I will try to form a plan of some sort myself." In other words, Greeley did not propose to be left out of the future Whig councils. "No other journal had done so much as the Tribune," says Seward's biographer, "to make Seward the idol of the antislavery people of various degrees." If there was a suspicion of a breach of trust in the Seward-Greeley-Weed firm, Greeley would naturally address any complaint to Seward.

Stung by the outcome of the election, in which the ticket bearing Raymond's name was successful, Greeley, without seeking an interview with Seward, addressed to him a letter that has become famous. It was dated November 11, 1854, and it opened with the following words: "Governor Seward—The election is over, and its result sufficiently ascertained. It seems to me a fitting time to

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announce to you the dissolution of the political firm of Seward, Weed, and Greeley, by the withdrawal of the junior partner, said withdrawal to take effect on the morning after the first Tuesday in February next" (when Seward would be elected United States Senator). The letter, which was a long one, went over Greeley's first acquaintance with Weed, set forth his editorial labors up to the time of Harrison's election, and said: "Now came the great scramble of the swell mob of coon minstrels and cider suckers at Washington—I not being counted in. Several regiments of them went on from this city, but no one of the whole crowd, though I say it who should not, had done so much toward General Harrison's nomination as yours respectfully. I asked nothing, expected nothing; but you, Governor Seward, ought to have asked that I be Postmaster of New York. Your asking would have been in vain; but it would have been an act of grace neither wasted nor undeserved. . . . When the Whig party, under your rule, had offices to give, my name was never thought of; but when, in 1842-'43, we were hopelessly out of power, I was honored with the party nomination for State Printer. When we came again to have a State Printer to *elect* as well as

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nominate, the place went to Weed, as it ought. . . . If a new office had not been created on purpose to give its valuable patronage to H. J. Raymond and enable St. John to show forth his Times as the organ of the Whig State administration, I should have been still more grateful."

Reviewing the recent campaign, he contradicted what Weed in his later autobiography said about seeking the nomination for Governor, saying that, when Weed called on him to state why he could not support him for that nomination, "I [Greeley] had never asked nor counted on his support." He "should have hated to serve as Lieutenant-Governor," but would have "gloried in running" so as to have had all his enemies upon him at once. But the nomination was given to Raymond, and he [Greeley] made the fight. The letter closed by saying that the writer trusted that they should never be found in opposition; "all I ask is that we shall be counted even on the morning after the first Tuesday in February, as aforesaid, and that I may thereafter take such course as seems best without reference to the past."

Seward did not even inform Weed of the contents of this letter, and Weed was ignorant of them until its publication, after Ray-

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mond, in a letter in the Times explaining Seward's defeat at Chicago in 1860, had hinted of it as supplying the motive for Greeley's opposition to Seward there. What Weed knew of the incident at the time from Seward was contained in the following letter:

"Has Greeley written to you, or do you see him nowadays? Just before the election he wrote me an abrupt letter. I did not think it wise to trouble you about it. Then, when he thought all was gone through your blunders and mine, he came out in the paper and said as much in a chafed spirit. To-day I have a long letter from him, full of sharp, pricking thorns. I judge, as we might well know, from his, at bottom, nobleness of disposition, that he has no idea of saying or doing anything wrong or unkind; but it is sad to see him so unhappy. Will there be a vacancy in the Board of Regents this winter? Could one be made at the close of the session? Could he have it? Raymond's nomination and election is hard for him to bear. I think this is a good letter to burn. I wish I could do Greeley so great a kindness as to burn his."

From the date of his letter to Seward, Greeley showed a determination to give his own judgment free rein, and, perhaps

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through lack of influences that had previously restrained him, his course became more and more erratic. We find an early illustration of this in 1858—the year of the famous Lincoln-Douglas debate in Illinois—when he favored the acceptance of Douglas as the Republican candidate for United States Senator, and in a letter to a Chicago editor spoke of the failure to conciliate Douglas as spurning and insulting the Republicans of other States, and added: “If Lincoln would fight up to the work also, you might get through. . . . You have got your elephant—you would have him—now shoulder him. He is not so heavy after all.” His early lack of faith in the success of the Republican party was not overcome, and in writing to G. E. Baker on April 28, 1859, he said:

“I lack faith that the antislavery men of this country have either the numbers or the sagacity required to make a President. I do not believe there are a hundred thousand earnest antislaverymen in this State, or a million in the Union. . . . Slavery has not another body of servitors half so useful and efficient as the most rabid Abolitionists. . . . I hope Seward or Chase will be nominated on the platform of 1856, and then I will go to work for him with a will, but with perfect

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certainty that we are to be horribly beaten. I only want to be in such a shape that, when the thing is over, I can say, 'I told you so.' I don't believe the time ever has been (or soon will be) when, on a square issue, the Republicans could or can poll one hundred electoral votes. But let her drive." <sup>1</sup>

Greeley attended the National Republican Convention of 1860 not as a delegate from his own State, but as the representative of an Oregon district that had asked him to serve. He went to Chicago declaring that his candidate was Edward Bates, of Missouri, a Virginian by birth, and a lifelong slaveholder! "He was thoroughly conservative," Greeley afterward explained, "and so held fast to the doctrine of our revolutionary sages, that slavery was an evil to be restricted, not a good to be diffused. This conviction made him essentially a Republican; while I believed that he could poll votes in every slave State, and if elected, rally all that was left of the Whig party therein to resist secession and rebellion." In a statement published soon after the nomination of Lincoln, Greeley said that he had considered the nomination of Seward "unadvisable and unsafe,"

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<sup>1</sup> Weed's Autobiography, ii, p. 255.



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but that Seward's defeat was due to the conviction of the delegates from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Indiana that he could not carry those States. Thereupon Henry J. Raymond wrote from Seward's home a letter to the New York Times in which he gave a different account of Greeley's action at the convention. The letter was a very bitter one, as a few extracts from it will show:

"The main work of the Chicago convention was the defeat of Governor Seward, . . . and in that endeavor Mr. Greeley labored harder and did tenfold more than the whole family of Blairs, together with all the gubernatorial candidates to whom he modestly hands over the honors of the effective campaign. He had special qualifications as well as a special love for the task, to which none of the others could lay any claim. For twenty years he had been sustaining the political principles and vindicating the political conduct of Mr. Seward through the columns of the most influential political newspaper in the country. . . . He had gone far beyond him in expressions of hostility to slavery, in palliation of armed attempts for its overthrow, and in assaults upon that clause of the Constitution which requires the surrender of the fugitive slaves; and he was known to have



THE UNION LEAGUE CLUB,

MADISON AVENUE, corner of Twenty-sixth Street,

NEW-YORK, Aug. 20, 1877

Mr. Linn:

I guess you will  
have to print Foley  
in the first side, but  
not ~~only~~ as that is  
old. My reader Eel has  
"Mr. Foley's letter to  
Major Hall" appears in  
Willen can - boy.

You have two New Jer.  
regt. letters. Print both  
if you can; list of N. J.  
Troops any how. H. G.

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been for more than twenty years his personal friend and political supporter. . . . Mr. Greeley was in Chicago several days before the meeting of the convention, and he devoted every hour of the interval to the most steady and relentless prosecution of the main business which took him hither—the defeat of Governor Seward. He labored personally with the delegates as they arrived, commending himself always to their confidence by professions of regard and the most zealous friendship for Governor Seward, but presenting defeat even in New York as the inevitable result of his nomination. . . . While the contents of Greeley's letter of November 11, 1854, to Seward were known to some of Seward's supporters who were working at Chicago, no use was made of this knowledge in quarters where it would have disarmed the deadly effect of his pretended friendship for the man upon whom he was thus deliberately wreaking the long-hoarded revenge of a disappointed office-seeker. He was still allowed to represent to the delegations from Vermont, New Hampshire, Ohio, Indiana, and other States known to be in favor of Governor Seward's nomination, that, while he desired it upon the strongest grounds of personal and political friendship, he be-

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lieved it would be fatal to the success of the cause."

This was the first public reference that had been made to Greeley's letter to Seward. Greeley now demanded its publication, and this followed, and the actual rupture of the political firm then occurred. Weed reviewed the letter in the Albany Evening Journal with this summing up:

"In conclusion, we can not withhold an expression of sincere regret that this letter has been called out. Having remained six years in 'blissful ignorance' of its contents, we should much prefer to have ever remained so. It jars harshly upon cherished memories. It destroys ideals of disinterestedness and generosity which relieve political life from so much that is selfish, sordid, and rapacious."

When, in 1861, the nomination for United States Senator at Albany lay between Greeley and William M. Evarts, and Greeley was gaining in the caucus balloting, Weed had the name of Ira Harris presented, and so snatched the nomination from his old friend. When, in 1869, Greeley accepted the nomination for State Comptroller, after three candidates on the ticket had declined their nominations, Weed refused to support him, and wrote a letter in which he analyzed Greeley's

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course in later years, and declared that it was "preposterous" to suppose that the editor of a daily journal in New York could so divide his time as to discharge also the duties of Comptroller. The vote at the polls stood: Greeley, 307,688; Allen, 330,371.<sup>1</sup>

Greeley met with denials the charges that his opposition to Seward's nomination was due to any personal hostility, saying in reply to Weed's statement: "The most careful scavenger of private letters or the most sneaking eavesdropper that ever listened to private conversation, can not allege a single reason for any personal hostility on my part against Mr. Seward. I have never received from him anything but exceeding kindness and courtesy. He has done me favors (not of a political nature) in a manner which made them still more obliging; and I should regard the loss of his friendship as a very serious loss. Notwithstanding this, I could not support him for President. I like Mr. Seward personally, but I love the party and its principles more."

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<sup>1</sup> Greeley was a member of the State Constitutional Convention in 1867. In 1870 he ran for Congress against S. S. Cox, and was defeated by a majority of 1,025 votes, the district giving the Democratic candidate for Governor a majority of 1,745 at the same election.

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The Albany Evening Journal charged that Seward's appointment by Lincoln as Secretary of State was made "against the persistent protestations of those who concurred with the Tribune." The Tribune replied that it "promptly and heartily approved" of Seward's selection, and let the new President know that its editor would not accept the Postmaster-Generalship.<sup>1</sup>

The announcement of Lincoln's election was followed by instant threats of secession on the part of the South, and by demands for concessions to the slave power by many interests—business and political—in the North. Greeley met this situation by taking the ground, in the Tribune of December 17, 1860, that, if the right of the colonists to rebel against Great Britain was justified by the "consent of the governed" clause of the Declaration of Independence, that clause would justify "the secession of five million of Southrons from the Federal Union in 1861." Jefferson's principle might be "pushed to extreme and baleful consequences"; but, while he would not uphold the secession of Governor's Island from New York, if seven or

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<sup>1</sup> "There was no moment of Mr. Lincoln's rule when any place in his gift would have been accepted by Mr. Greeley."—Tribune, March 16, 1872.

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eight contiguous States should secede from the Union he would not think it right to "stand up for coercion." If Mayor Fernando Wood had not had free trade in view, Greeley might have joined him in his suggestion to the Common Council of New York city on January 6, 1861, that, if the Union, which, he held, could not be constitutionally kept together by force, was dissolved, the city should separate from the State and establish a "Free City," which would have "cheap goods nearly free from duty." A week later he declared that, if any six or more of the cotton States wanted to secede, "we will do our best to help them out, not that we want them to go, but that we loathe the idea of compelling them to stay." The abstract right of a State to secede, under the Constitution, is upheld by some Republicans of prominence to-day. Without following their argument, it may be pointed out that what Washington had in view was an "inviolable Union," that "indissoluble Union" which he recommended to the Governors of the States; and that John Quincy Adams, in 1828, declared that, while the people of a State, "by the primitive right of insurrection against oppression" might declare their State out of the Union, "they have delegated no such power to their legislators



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or their judges; and if there be such a right, it is the right of an individual to commit suicide—the right of an inhabitant of a populous city to set fire to his own dwelling house.”

Greeley's declarations were eagerly accepted by the most radical defenders of secession in the South, Tombs using them to strengthen his argument in favor of the constitutional right of secession before the Georgia convention,<sup>1</sup> and they perplexed and alarmed the friends of Union in the North. Lincoln, realizing the harm which an editor of Greeley's influence could do to the Union cause, wrote to him, cautioning him against expressing such views. Greeley in his reply said that one State could no more secede at

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<sup>1</sup> In his *American Conflict*, written in 1864, Greeley quoted his editorial of December 17th in full, and in reasserting the possibility of justifying the free States in consenting to a withdrawal of the slave States from the Union, if that was the deliberate desire of the great body of their people, he added: “And the South had been so systematically, so outrageously, deluded by demagogues on both sides of the slave line, with regard to the nature and special importance of the Union to the North—it being habitually represented as an immense boon conferred on the free States by the slave, whose withdrawal would whelm us all in bankruptcy and ruin—that it might do something toward allaying the Southern inflammation to have it distinctly and plainly set forth that the North had no desire to enforce upon the South the maintenance of an abhorred, detested Union.”

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its pleasure than one state could secede from a cask, but that, if eight or ten States wanted to go, he would say, "There's the door, go." Still, if the seceding States began fighting while the Union was not yet dissolved, "I guess they will have to be made to behave themselves." The one thing he would object to would be "another nasty compromise." No more arguments in favor of secession appeared in the Tribune, and in January, 1861, Greeley wrote, "I deny to one State, or to a dozen different States, the right to dissolve this Union. It can only be legally dissolved as it was formed—by the free consent of all the parties concerned." Aside from its support of Greeley's schemes for meddling, and its hostility to Lincoln, the Tribune vigorously supported the Union cause during the war, and so concentrated on itself the hatred of the Southern sympathizers in New York city that, during the draft riots in 1863, its building was attacked by the mob.<sup>1</sup>

When Lincoln's first call for troops came, and war was actually begun, the nation had had no experience in warfare for fifty years. It had to rely, too, not on an organized force,

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<sup>1</sup> Henry Wilson gave to its managing editor, Sidney Howard Gay, the credit of keeping the Tribune loyal during the war.

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but on raw recruits, hurriedly summoned from peaceful pursuits, and who had to be organized, drilled, fed, and sheltered under the direction of officers who were themselves without experience, save what some of them had been taught in the military school. But when a war begins, both sides are generally confident, and the desire of the public is for speedy action. It was so in 1861, and the Tribune soon gave voice to this desire by printing, day after day, on its editorial page, the following advice:

### "THE NATION'S WAR-CRY

"Forward to Richmond! Forward to Richmond! The rebel Congress must not be allowed to meet there on the twentieth of July! By that date the place must be held by the national army."

When the advance was made, and the disaster of Bull Run followed, Greeley and the Tribune incurred what might be called a national denunciation. "The battle of Bull Run," says Parton, "nearly cost the editor of the Tribune his life. Mr. Greeley was almost beside himself with horror," to which "was added, perhaps, some contrition for having permitted the paper to goad the Government into an advance which events showed to

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be either too late or premature." Greeley made a statement in July, 1861, in which he said that while the cry, "Forward to Richmond" was not his coining, and he would have preferred not to iterate it, he assumed the responsibility for it, but averred that neither he nor any one connected with the Tribune "ever commended or imagined any such strategy as the launching of barely thirty of the one hundred thousand Union volunteers within fifty miles of Washington, against ninety thousand rebels, enveloped in a labyrinth of strong entrenchments, and un-reconnoitered masked batteries." This explanation of his position he repeated in later years, saying, for instance, in his most careful estimate of Lincoln<sup>1</sup> that the early delay was due to the President's "delusion" that "soft words would obviate all necessity for deadly strife," and that, because of this, "new volunteers were left for weeks to rot in idleness and dissipation in the outskirts and purlieus of Washington, because their commander-in-chief believed that it would never be necessary or advisable to load their muskets with ball cartridges." The extent of Greeley's panic was not disclosed until the

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<sup>1</sup> Address printed in the Century, July, 1891.

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publication of the following letter to Lincoln in 1887, many years after both he and Lincoln were dead:

“NEW YORK, *Monday, July 29, 1861. Midnight.*

“DEAR SIR: This is my seventh sleepless night—yours, too, doubtless—yet I think I shall not die, because I have no right to die. I must struggle to live, however bitterly. But to business. You are not considered a great man, and I am a hopelessly broken one. You are now undergoing a terrible ordeal, and God has thrown the gravest responsibilities upon you. Do not fear to meet them. Can the rebels be beaten after all that has occurred, and in view of the actual state of feeling caused by our late awful disaster? If they can—and it is your business to ascertain and decide—write me that such is your judgment, so that I may know and do my duty. And if they *can not* be beaten—if our recent disaster is fatal—do not fear to sacrifice yourself to your country. If the rebels are not to be beaten—if that is your judgment in view of all the light you can get—then every drop of blood henceforth shed in this quarrel will be wantonly, wickedly shed, and the guilt will rest heavily on the soul of every promoter of the crime. I pray

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you to decide quickly, and let me know my duty.

“If the Union is irrevocably gone, an armistice for thirty, sixty, ninety, one hundred and twenty days—better still for a year—ought at once to be proposed with a view to a peaceful adjustment. Then Congress should call a national convention, to meet at the earliest possible day. And there should be an immediate and mutual exchange or release of prisoners and a disbandment of forces. I do not consider myself at present a judge of anything but the public sentiment. That seems to me everywhere gathering and deepening against a prosecution of the war. The gloom in this city is funereal—for our dead at Bull Run were many, and they lie unburied yet. On every brow sits sullen, scorching, black despair. It would be easy to have Mr. Crittenden move any proposition that ought to be adopted, or to have it come from any proper quarter. The first point is to ascertain what is best that can be done—which is the measure of our duty—and do that very thing at the earliest moment.

“This letter is written in the strictest confidence, and is for your eye alone. But you are at liberty to say to members of your Cab-

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inet that you *know* I will second any movement you may see fit to make. But do nothing timidly nor by halves. Send me word what to do. I will live till I can hear it, at all events. If it is best for the country and for mankind that we make peace with the rebels at once, and on their own terms, do not shrink even from that. But bear in mind the greatest truth: 'Whoso would lose his life for my sake shall save it.' Do the thing that is the highest right, and tell me how I am to second you.

"Yours, in the depth of bitterness,  
"HORACE GREELEY."<sup>1</sup>

Even this letter did not discourage the President. His biographers say: "He smiled at frettings like those of Scott, Dix, and Richardson; but letters like that of Greeley made him sigh at the strange weakness of human character. Such things gave him pain, but they bred no resentment, and elicited no reply."

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<sup>1</sup> The publication of this letter was a shock to Greeley's old Tribune office friends, and Samuel Sinclair, long his publisher, in a note to that journal, dated January 1, 1888, said: "When that letter was written Mr. Greeley had been and was still severely ill with brain fever; the entire letter, in my judgment, revealed that he was on the verge of insanity when he wrote it."

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Greeley's lack of faith in the ability of the North to preserve the Union by force of arms next manifested itself in efforts to settle the dispute by negotiation. With this end in view, he was ready to treat either with the representative of a foreign power or with any one assuming to represent the Confederacy. M. Mercier, the French minister at Washington, was openly friendly to the South. He had advised the Emperor Napoleon to recognize the Confederacy and to raise the blockade, and was using all his influence in behalf of the rebellious States. In 1862 Greeley appealed to Mercier to secure the intervention of the French Government to end the war. Mercier commended the suggestion to his fellow diplomats in Washington, urging that it was an indication of the weakness of even the radicals of the North, and declaring that the idea that Greeley would favor no step that would endanger the Union was "all bosh."

The view of the administration at Washington concerning these negotiations was set forth in a reply by Secretary Seward to a despatch from the French Foreign Secretary to M. Mercier, suggesting "informal conferences" with the Confederates to end the war. In this reply (dated February 6, 1863), Sew-



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ard repudiated the suggestion that the war had not been vigorously carried on, and said: "M. de l'Huys, I fear, has taken other light than the correspondence of this Government for his guidance in ascertaining its temper and firmness. He has probably read of divisions of sentiment among those who hold themselves forth as organs of public opinion here, and has given to them undue importance." As to the appointment of commissioners by our Government and the Confederates, to meet on neutral ground and discuss the situation, he said: "The commissioners must agree in recommending either that the Union shall stand or that it shall be voluntarily dissolved; or else they must leave the vital question unsettled, to abide at last the fortunes of war. . . . There is not the least ground to suppose that the controlling (insurgent) actors would be persuaded at this moment, by any arguments which national commissioners could offer, to forego the ambition that has impelled them to the disloyal position they are occupying. Any commissioners who should be appointed by these actors, or through their dictation or influence, must enter the conference imbued with the spirit and pledged to the personal fortunes of the insurgent chiefs. The loyal people in

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the insurrectionary States would be unheard, and any offer of peace by this Government, on the condition of the maintenance of the Union, must necessarily be rejected. On the other hand, as I have already intimated, this Government has not the least thought of relinquishing the trust which has been confided to it by the nation under the most solemn of all political sanctions; and, if it had any such thought, it would still have abundant reason to know that peace proposed at the cost of dissolution would be immediately, unreservedly, and indignantly rejected by the American people."

Henry J. Raymond, in his journal,<sup>1</sup> mentions that Collector Barney told him in Washington, on January 25, 1863, that he knew that Greeley had been in correspondence with Vallandigham about mediation, and that later Greeley said to him (Raymond), on the Albany boat, that "he meant to carry out the policy of foreign mediation, and of bringing the war to a close. 'You'll see,' said he, 'that I'll drive Lincoln into it.' " On the way back to New York one of the trustees of the Tribune Association told Raymond that the trustees would not permit Greeley to con-

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<sup>1</sup> Scribner's Monthly, March, 1880.

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tinue the advocacy of intervention in the paper.<sup>1</sup>

Raymond also recalls an after-dinner conversation in Washington, on January 26, 1863, when Secretary Seward, Rev. Dr. Bellows, George Bancroft, General McDowell, and others were present, at which Seward spoke very bitterly of the effect of Greeley's negotiations with the French minister, and said that Greeley had clearly made himself liable to the penalties of the law forbidding such intercourse.

In August, 1862, following McClellan's retreat from the Virginia peninsula, Greeley addressed to President Lincoln through the columns of the Tribune a long letter under the title *The Prayer of Twenty Millions*, signed with his initials. It began by saying that the President must already know that

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<sup>1</sup> In one of its articles favoring mediation by a friendly foreign power, the Tribune (in January, 1863) said: "The prevalent opinion on that [European] side of the Atlantic blames us Unionists more than the rebels because it is their belief that the rebels are willing and anxious for peace on any terms that impartial judges shall deem fair, while our Government will listen to no terms short of unconditional submission to its authority, and this conviction does very great harm to our cause." It would therefore assume that a foreign offer of mediation was friendly and generous, and agree to consider arbitration when the Confederate assent thereto had been obtained.

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his supporters "are sorely disappointed and deeply pained by the policy you seem to be pursuing with regard to the slaves of rebels." Under nine headings he set forth the specifications of this charge, its main points being that the President was "strangely and disastrously remiss" in regard to the emancipation provisions of the new confiscation act; that the Union cause had suffered immensely from mistaken deference to rebel slavery; that timid counsels in such a crisis were calculated to prove perilous; and that if the President, in his inaugural address, had given notice that, if rebellion was persisted in, he would "recognize no loyal person as rightfully held in slavery by a traitor," the rebellion would have received a staggering, if not fatal, blow. Finally, he demanded that the President give his subordinates direction that, under the confiscation act, the slaves of rebels coming or brought within the Union lines were to be free.

This letter called out Lincoln's reply of August 22, in which he said: "My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all slaves I would do it; and if I could

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do it by freeing some, and leaving others alone, I would also do that. What I do about slavery and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save this Union." In less than a month from the receipt of Greeley's letter, Lincoln issued his emancipation proclamation. As some writers have held that this proclamation was a result of Greeley's prodding, it is interesting to obtain Greeley's own statement on this point. In his lecture on Lincoln, written about the year 1868, he thus disposed of this matter: "I had not besought him to proclaim general emancipation; I had only urged him to give full effect to the laws of the land, which prescribed that slaves employed with their masters' acquiescence in support of the rebellion should henceforth be treated as free by such employment, and by the general hostility of their owners to the national authority. I have no doubt that Mr. Lincoln's letter had been prepared before he ever saw my 'prayer,' and that this was merely used by him as an opportunity, an occasion, an excuse, for setting his own altered position—changed not at his volition, but by circumstances—fairly before the country." <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Owen Lovejoy, writing to William Lloyd Garrison in February, 1864, about the reported influence which induced Lin-

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The earliest opposition to Lincoln's re-nomination manifested itself in a call for a convention to be held in Cleveland, Ohio, one week before the date of the National Republican Convention. The New Yorkers who signed this call included advocates of the nomination of General Frémont, the Rev. George B. Cheever and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. B. Gratz Brown, Greeley's running mate in 1872, was one of the signers in St. Louis, and Wendell Phillips was a warm sympathizer with the movement. The convention, amid much disorder, nominated General Frémont for President, and John Cochran for Vice-President (both from the same State, the Constitution to the contrary, notwithstanding). Frémont accepted, but Cochran

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coln to issue the emancipation proclamation, said: "Now, the fact is this, as I had it from his own lips: He had written the proclamation in the summer, as early as June, I think—but will not be certain about the precise time—and called his Cabinet together and informed them he had written it and meant to make it, but wanted to read it to them for any criticism or remarks as to features or details. After having done so, Mr. Seward suggested whether it would not be well for him to withhold its publication until after we had gained some substantial advantage in the field, as at that time we had met with many reverses and it might be considered a cry of despair. He told me he thought the suggestion a good one, and so held on to the proclamation until after the battle of Antietam."

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withdrew his name, and the Cleveland ticket was not heard of further.

Meanwhile, the Republicans all over the country were manifesting their demand for Lincoln's second nomination, and the work of the Baltimore convention was, so far as the head of the ticket was concerned, decided in advance. A committee, self-constituted, of which Greeley's long-time opponent William Cullen Bryant was a member, urged the National Republican Committee to postpone the convention. The Tribune made no editorial comment on Frémont's nomination, but the day before the Republican convention met it declared its conviction that the gathering should be postponed "while every effort of the loyal millions should be directed toward the overthrow of the armed hosts of the rebellion," adding: "We feel that the expected nomination, if made at this time, exposes the Union party to a dangerous 'flank movement'—possibly a successful one."

When the renomination of Lincoln was made, the Tribune restated its objection. And what was it? That there were a large number of foes in our own household, at heart enemies of the national cause, who wanted the war to break down, and the Government to be forced to make peace on the

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rebels' terms; that these men made their assaults under cover of hostility to the administration, and that "the renomination of Mr. Lincoln will inevitably intensify their efforts, and rebarb their arrows. . . . We believe the rebellion would have lost something of its cohesion and venom from the hour in which it was known that a new President would surely be inaugurated on the fourth of March next; and that hostility in the loyal States to the national cause must have sensibly abated, or been deprived of its most dangerous weapons, from the moment that all were brought to realize that the President, having no more to expect or hope, could henceforth be influenced by no conceivable motive but a desire to serve and save his country, and thus win for himself an enviable and enduring fame." In the light of what we now know of Lincoln's part and Greeley's part in pushing the great struggle for the preservation of the nation to a successful end, it is unnecessary to comment on this proposal to surrender Lincoln as a sop to Northern "Copperheads," or on this stab at the motives of the man who was wearing his heart out in the nation's behalf.

Greeley's hostility to Lincoln did not cease with the action of the National Republican Convention. The summer of 1864 was



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a trying one to all loyal hearts, and when August closed Grant had met with a check before Petersburg, Sherman was supposed still to be out of Atlanta, and the Democratic National Convention had pronounced the war a failure, and called for a cessation of hostilities. Two days after this platform was adopted, Greeley, on September 2, sent to the Governors of the loyal States a letter making three inquiries: "Is the reelection of Mr. Lincoln a probability? Can your own State be carried for Mr. Lincoln? Do the interests of the Union party require the substitution of another candidate in place of Mr. Lincoln?" The replies of the loyal Governors were rebukes to the editor's suggestion. How could they be otherwise? The withdrawal of the Republican candidate a few weeks before the election would have been an acknowledgment of weakness that would have meant party demoralization and certain defeat at the polls, no matter who might have been put up in Mr. Lincoln's place. Verily, Thurlow Weed was correct when he thought that Greeley "knew nothing about politics."

Greeley's defeat in his efforts to prevent Lincoln's renomination did not make him any more modest in playing the part of adviser to the administration. "In personal inter-

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views, in private letters, and in the columns of the Tribune, he repeatedly placed before the President with that vigor of expression in which he was unrivaled the complaints and the discontents of a considerable body of devoted, if not altogether reasonable, Union men," thus drawing around him "a certain number of adventurers and busybodies, who fluttered between the two great parties, and were glad to occupy the attention of prominent men on either side with schemes whose only real object was some slight gain or questionable notoriety for themselves."<sup>1</sup> One of these adventurers who gained Greeley's ear was William Cornell Jewett, "of Colorado," who had been an interminable epistolary adviser of the President. In July, 1864, he wrote Greeley from Niagara Falls that two Confederate ambassadors were then in Canada, with "full and complete powers for a peace," and urging Greeley to go on at once for the purpose of a private interview, or to obtain the President's protection, that they might meet Greeley in the United States.

This proposition so impressed Greeley that he wrote to the President, reminding him that "our bleeding, bankrupt country also

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<sup>1</sup> Nicolay-Hay Lincoln, ix, p. 184.

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longs for peace; shudders at the prospect of fresh conscriptions, of further wholesale devastation, and of new rivers of blood," disapproving of the warlike tone of the platform on which Lincoln had just been renominated (Greeley's old rival, Henry J. Raymond had reported it), and suggesting, as terms of settlement, a Union restored and declared perpetual, the abolition of slavery, with complete amnesty, and a \$400,000,000 indemnity for the freed slaves. In closing, he expressed a fear that Lincoln did not realize how intently the people desired "any peace consistent with the national integrity and honor," adding, "with United States stocks worth but forty cents in gold per dollar, and drafting about to commence on the third million of Union soldiers, can this be wondered at?"

Lincoln's patience and kindly treatment of Greeley throughout this episode are admirably set forth in the Nicolay-Hay biography. Realizing the futility of the proposed negotiations, as well as Greeley's honesty of purpose, Lincoln decided to make use of his offer in order to show the country what such negotiations would amount to. So he placed Greeley in the front as negotiator, replying to him as follows: "If you can find

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any person, anywhere, professing to have any proposition of Jefferson Davis in writing, for peace, embracing the restoration of the Union and the abandonment of slavery, whatever else it embraces, say to him that he may come to me with you," under a safe-conduct. This broad acceptance of any authorized peace agent, under Greeley's guidance, puzzled the editor, and he first replied, expressing doubt whether the negotiators would "open their budget" to him. But very soon afterward he wrote Lincoln again, giving him in confidence the names of the Confederate agents (Clement C. Clay, of Alabama, and Jacob Thompson, of Mississippi), saying that he had reliable information of their authority and anxiety to confer with the President or such persons as he might authorize to treat with them, and urging prompt action, that it might do good in the coming North Carolina election. Greeley thus ignored the authority already given him to conduct the peace agents to Washington; but the patient Lincoln, in order to bring the matter to a head, sent Major John Hay (the present Secretary of State) to him with a letter expressing his disappointment that Greeley had not reached Washington with the Confederate commissioners, repeating the invita-

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tion to bring them, and concluding, "I not only intend a sincere effort for peace, but intend that you shall be a personal witness that it is made."

Greeley still hesitated, but he finally consented to go to Niagara if he should be furnished with a safe-conduct to Washington for four persons, and this was immediately granted. Upon his arrival at Niagara he sent by Jewett a letter to the Confederate negotiators, telling them of the safe-conduct he had for them if they were "duly accredited from Richmond as the bearers of propositions looking to the establishment of peace." Thereupon he was informed that the men whom he was addressing had no such credentials; as they wrote to him later, that was "a character we had no right to assume, and had never affected to possess." They could only aver that they knew the view of their Government, and could *get* credentials. In other words, whatever terms might then have been proposed, would have been overtures from the United States Government to the Confederates. But Greeley did not comprehend this, and simply reported to Lincoln the reply he had received, and asked for further instructions. Lincoln's patience was not even then exhausted. He sent to Greeley at

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once, by the hands of Major Hay, the following in his own handwriting:

“EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON, *July 18, 1864.*

*“To Whom it May Concern:* Any proposition which embraces the restoration of peace, the integrity of the whole Union, and the abandonment of slavery, and which comes by and with an authority that can control the armies now at war against the United States, will be received and considered by the Executive Government of the United States, and will be met by liberal terms on other substantial points, and the bearer or bearers thereof shall have safe-conduct both ways.

“ABRAHAM LINCOLN.”

The handing of this letter to one of the Confederates practically ended the negotiations. But Greeley, unknown to Major Hay, privately authorized Jewett to act as his (Greeley's) representative in regard to any future offers that might come from the Confederates; Jewett made known to the latter his regrets over the “sad termination” of the deliberations; the Confederates sent him a letter addressed to Greeley, in which they attacked the President for alleged lack of good faith, and Jewett gave this letter to the newspapers. In the newspaper discussion of the

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matter that followed, Greeley agreed with the Confederates that the President's safe-conduct abrogated the condition he had originally set forth, thus making a "rude withdrawal of a courteous overture for negotiation at a moment it was likely to be accepted," and being "an emphatic recall of words of peace just uttered, and fresh blasts of war to the bitter end." In the Tribune of August 5, 1864, he held that the President's letter of July 18 changed the situation entirely, but added, "I am quite sure the mistake was not originally the President's, but that of some one or more of the gentlemen who are paid \$8,000 a year from the Treasury for giving him bad advice; and from certain earmarks I infer that it had its initial impulse from the War Department."

Lincoln, in his kindness of heart toward Greeley, proposed to the latter that, in view of the probable necessity of publishing their correspondence, parts of Greeley's letters, including those referring to the probable political advantage of the peace negotiations, be omitted, and invited him to Washington for a personal discussion. This invitation Greeley declined, and in his reply to a second one he said:

"I fear that my chance for usefulness has

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passed. I know that nine-tenths of the whole American people, North and South, are anxious for peace—peace on almost any terms—and utterly sick of human slaughter and devastation. I know that, to the general eye, it now seems that the rebels are anxious to negotiate, and that we repulse their advances. I know that if this impression be not removed we shall be beaten out of sight next November. I firmly believe that, were the election to take place to-morrow, the Democratic majority in this State and Pennsylvania would amount to 100,000, and that we should lose Connecticut also.<sup>1</sup> Now, if the rebellion can be crushed before November, it will do to go on; if not, we are rushing on certain ruin.

“What, then, can I do in Washington? Your trusted advisers nearly all think I ought to go to Fort Lafayette for what I have done already. Seward wanted me sent there for my brief conference with M. Mercier. The cry had steadily been, No truce! No armistice! No negotiation! No mediation! Nothing but surrender at discretion! I never heard of such fatuity before. There is noth-

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<sup>1</sup> Pennsylvania gave Lincoln 20,075 majority the following November, Connecticut gave him 2,406, and New York gave Seymour only 6,749.



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ing like it in history. It *must* result in disaster, or all experience is delusive. . . .

“In case peace can not now be made, consent to an *armistice for one year*, each party to retain, unmolested, all it now holds, but the rebel ports to be open. Meantime, let a national convention be held, and there will surely be no war, at all events.”

Greeley, in closing this correspondence, insisted that all or none of it should be published. “This was accepted by Mr. Lincoln,” say his biographers, “as a veto upon its publication. He could not afford, for the sake of vindicating his own action, to reveal to the country the despondency—one might almost say the desperation—of one so prominent in Republican circles as the editor of the *Tribune*.” The correspondence did not appear until Messrs. Nicolay and Hay laid it before their readers in 1890.

One illustration of Greeley’s feeling toward Lincoln remains to be cited. On the day that Lincoln was shot Greeley had written an editorial, “a brutal, bitter, sarcastic personal attack” on the President. When the proof of this article reached the hands of the managing editor, Sidney Howard Gay, in the evening, Mr. Lincoln was dying from his wound. Gay suppressed the editorial, telling

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the foreman to lock up the type and tell no one of its existence. The next day, when Greeley found that the article was not in the paper, he accosted Gay in a rage, saying, "They tell me you ordered my leader out of this morning's paper. Is it your paper or mine? I should like to know if I can not print what I choose in my own paper." Gay replied that the article was still in type, and could be used, but added: "Only this, Mr. Greeley. I know New York, and I hope and believe before God that there is so much virtue in New York that, if I had let that article go into this morning's paper, there would not be one brick upon another in the Tribune office now." Greeley never alluded to the subject again.<sup>1</sup>

The following statement has recently been printed: "It was known to but few persons at the time—and those then connected with the New York Tribune—that President Lincoln paid a visit to Horace Greeley, at the Tribune office, of a most sacred nature and presumably of a most urgent and important character, somewhere about the time of the accession of Grant to the office of commander-in-chief of the army, arriving in the even-

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<sup>1</sup> Hale's Lowell and his Friends, pp. 178, 179.

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ing and leaving for the capital early in the morning, with few but themselves cognizant of the fact. The important events around Petersburg and Richmond followed shortly afterward, and those events were probably the subject of their conference." This story is inherently improbable, and I have the most competent authority for saying that it belongs in the list of romances which include another recently published story that Lincoln once went secretly to pass a night in prayer with Henry Ward Beecher.

Greeley furnished his own comment on his estimate and treatment of Lincoln during the period of the war. One of his best pieces of literary work is an address on Lincoln, which he wrote in 1868. In this he reviewed Lincoln's entire career, pointing out mistakes with which he credited him, and summing up his estimate of the man in these words:

"Never before did one so constantly and visibly grow under the discipline of incessant cares, anxieties, and trials. The Lincoln of '62 was plainly a larger, broader, better man than he had been in '61; while '63 and '64 worked his continued and unabated growth in mental and moral stature. Few have been more receptive, more sympathetic, and (within reasonable limits) more plastic than he.

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Had he lived twenty years longer, I believe he would have steadily increased in ability to counsel his countrymen, and in the estimation of the wise and good. . . .

“The republic needed to be cast through chastening, purifying fires of adversity and suffering; so these came and did their work, and the verdure of a new national life springs greenly from their ashes. Other men were helpful to the great renervation, and nobly did their part in it; yet, looking back through the lifting mists of seven eventful, tragic, trying, glorious years, I clearly discern that the one providential leader, the indispensable hero of the great drama—faithfully reflecting even in his hesitations and seeming vacillation the sentiment of the masses—fitted by his very defects and shortcomings for the burden laid upon him, the good to be wrought out through him, was Abraham Lincoln.”

## CHAPTER IX

### GREELEY'S PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN—HIS DEATH

ON the evening of March 4, 1869, John Russell Young, the managing editor of the Tribune, came to my desk (I was then the assistant city editor), with a long letter, written on Tribune notepaper, in his fine hand, which he asked me to copy for him. The letter was addressed to General Grant's intimate friend, General Adam Badeau. The next morning I found this letter, with only the necessary alterations, printed as the Tribune's leading editorial, giving an outline of what the paper hoped for Grant's administration. There were to be economy and retrenchment; Cuba seemed to be "falling into our lap for nothing"; Santo Domingo stood at our door, and with it would come Porto Rico; for Canada we could wait; Grant was to change possible national bankruptcy into solvency, bring about specie payments, and send ships carrying the American flag into every sea—in a word, to have a "splendid

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administration." At the close of the President's first term, the editor of the Tribune was the candidate who was opposing him for reelection, and on a platform which was preceded by an address accusing the Grant administration of usurpation of power, and of striking a blow at the fundamental principles of constitutional government and the liberties of the people; charging the President with the use of his high powers for the promotion of personal ends, making the public service "a machinery of corruption," and alleging that his partizans had "kept alive the passions and resentments of the late civil war, to use them for their own advantage."

In explaining this changed position, it is necessary to glance back at the causes of Republican discontent, and to review Greeley's position on the question of reconstruction.

General Grant naturally carried his military ideas into the White House. He was not tactful in conciliating those who disagreed with him about his civil policy, and was stubborn in supporting men whom he had selected for office when they came under a fire of adverse criticism. Some of his advisers early encountered such criticism, and serious scandals were brought to light in the Post-Office and other departments. Many Republicans

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came to believe that the President was personally corrupt, and that his fidelity to friends "under fire" was due to his own connection with their schemes. His civil appointments were often very injudicious, and there grew up a large body of independents ready to accept the declaration of the Nation that the President had so used his power of appointment that there was in office "a body of officials such as no party in a constitutional country has ever been served by, and such as no government except that of imperial France has ever brought into play to influence an election."

Both among and outside of the radical civil service and revenue reformers were many men in the North who were anxious to see the negro question eliminated from Federal politics. The disfranchisement of the leading white men in the Southern States who had participated in the rebellion had handed over the governments of many of these States to the ignorant negroes, and to newcomers from the North, who were soon classified under the name of "carpetbaggers," and an era of governmental chaos ensued, out of which came scandalous waste of the public funds, the grossest travesties in the way of legislatures, and the organization of

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the whites in "Kuklux Klans," which, as is always the case in such organizations formed outside of the law, committed terrible outrages in their efforts to check existing evils. A motion in the House of Representatives, in June, 1870, to remove all political disabilities for participation in the rebellion was lost, 59 to 112, 11 Republicans voting with the minority. President Grant, in his message in 1871, said: "It may be considered whether it is not now time that the disabilities imposed by the Fourteenth Amendment be removed." On a motion in the House by Mr. Dawes, on January 15, 1872, to remove all the disabilities named in this amendment, the vote was, yeas, 132; nays, 70; not two-thirds, as was necessary to pass the resolution, Dawes, Garfield, and Hale voting with the yeas.

While Greeley was not identified personally with the civil service reformers, he was the leader of those Republicans who demanded an end of all proscription for participation in the rebellion. With the laying down of the rebel arms he had lifted up his voice for magnanimity toward the South. The day after Lee's surrender the Tribune said (May 10, 1865): "We can not believe it wise or well to take the life of any man who shall have submitted to the national authority," explain-



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ing, "Unquestionably, there are men in the South who have richly deserved condign punishment. Whoever is responsible for the butchery of our black soldiers vanquished in fight, or the still more atrocious murder of captives by wanton exposure in prison-camps, stands in this category. But the immediate issue concerns, not the dispensation of justice to individuals, but the pacification of the whole republic."

On November 27, 1866, when a hopeful candidate for United States Senator, Greeley, with the knowledge that the declaration would destroy his chances of election, said in the Tribune: "I am for universal amnesty—so far as immunity from fear of punishment or confiscation is concerned—even though impartial suffrage should for the present be resisted and defeated. I *did* think it desirable that Jefferson Davis should be arraigned and tried for treason; and it still seems to me that this might properly have been done many months ago. But it was not done then, and now I believe it would result in far more evil than good. I hope to see impartial suffrage established by very general consent. . . . The one simple, obvious mode of taking the negro out of politics is to treat him as a man."

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Greeley visited Washington by invitation after the elections of 1865, and took part in conferences with President Johnson, the object of which was to secure cooperation and peace between him and Congress. These efforts failed; the President issued a proclamation of amnesty, excepting fourteen classes, including generally all persons who had taken official part in the rebellion, and by proclamation he established governments in several of the lately rebellious States; and on April 2, 1866, he officially proclaimed the rebellion at an end. Congress met, and appointed a joint committee to report on the existing condition of the rebelling States, and the conflict between the President and the Federal Legislature ensued, the President vetoing the reconstruction measures which Congress passed during that conflict. Greeley was a bitter opponent of President Johnson's policy. He called his veto of the bill establishing universal suffrage in the District of Columbia "the least plausible veto message we ever read"; said of the veto of the reconstruction bill (March 3, 1867): "Its obvious tendency to keep the Southern States unreconstructed and unrepresented is, in every view, deplorable"; and, during the impeachment trial, declared, "The nation demands impeachment."

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The reconstruction acts excluded from a share in the new State governments all persons already disfranchised for participation in the rebellion; an amendment offered in the House by Mr. Blaine, that the rebel States should be entitled to representation in Congress whenever the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution should be ratified, and they should consent to it, was defeated, 69 to 94. Greeley in a speech in Richmond, Va., in May, 1867, stated that he accepted this proscription "only as a precaution against *present* disloyalty," adding: "I believe the nation will insist on such proscription being removed so soon as reasonable and proper assurances are given that disloyalty has ceased to be powerful and dangerous in the Southern States."

When Jefferson Davis's counsel, George Shea, an old friend of Greeley, consulted the latter about procuring satisfactory bondsmen for his client, Greeley suggested two prominent Union men, and added, "If *my* name should be found necessary, you may use that." His name was asked for, and he went to Richmond, and there, in May, 1867, signed the bond with Gerritt Smith, Commodore Vanderbilt, and others. This act brought down on him such an avalanche of denuncia-

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tion from his party and personal admirers as he had never incurred. His motives were attacked, his interview with Davis misrepresented, and he was handed over by thousands of Republicans to the company of the late rebels. An indication of the public feeling was furnished by its effect on the sale of his history of the rebellion. In his own words, that sale then "almost ceased for a season; thousands who had subscribed for it refusing to take their copies." But, he added, "at all events, the public has learned that I act upon my convictions without fear of personal consequences."

The feeling against Greeley in New York city manifested itself most pointedly in a call, signed by more than thirty members, for a special meeting of the Union League Club, to consider his conduct in becoming Davis's bondsman. In reply to an official notification of this meeting, Greeley wrote to the signers of the call a vigorous letter, in which he rehearsed his early views about the disposition to be made of Davis, recalled the fact that, soon after their publication, the acceptance of a portrait of him by the club had been opposed by its president, and added:

"Gentlemen, I shall not attend your meeting this evening. I have an engagement out

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of town, and shall keep it. I do not recognize you as capable of judging, or fully apprehending, me. You evidently regard me as a weak sentimentalist, misled by a maudling philosophy. I arraign you as narrow-minded blockheads, who would like to be useful to a great and good cause, but don't know how. Your attempt to base a great, enduring party on the hate and wrath necessarily engendered by a bloody civil war, is as though you should plant a colony on an iceberg which had somehow drifted into a tropical ocean. I tell you here, that, out of a life earnestly devoted to the good of human kind, your children will select my going to Richmond and signing that bail bond as the wisest act, and will feel that it did more for freedom and humanity than all of you were competent to do, though you had lived to the age of Methuselah. I ask nothing of you, then, but that you proceed to your end by a direct, frank, manly way. Don't sidle off into a mild resolution of censure, but move the expulsion which you propose, and which I deserve, if I deserve any reproach whatever. All I care for is that you make this a square, stand-up fight, and record your judgment by yeas and nays."

The club, at its meeting, adopted a resolution setting forth that there was nothing in

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Greeley's action "calling for proceedings of this club."

While Greeley was in Richmond he accepted an invitation to deliver an address in the African Church, in which he made an earnest plea for good-will and reconciliation. He pointed out objections to some of the laws passed by the Southern State governments established under military rule—such as the prohibition against negroes bearing arms or testifying against whites in the courts—calling them "unnecessary, invidious, and degrading." Urging the obligation of the South as well as the North to the blacks, he said: "Their equal rights as citizens are to be secured now or not at all. I insist, then, in the name of justice and humanity, in the name of our country, and of every righteous interest and section of that country, that the rights of all the American people—native or naturalized, born such or made such—shall be guaranteed in the State Constitutions first, and in the Federal Constitution as soon as possible; that we make it a fundamental condition of American law and policy that every citizen shall have, in the eye of the law, every right of every other citizen. I would make the equal rights of the colored people of the country, under the laws and the Constitution

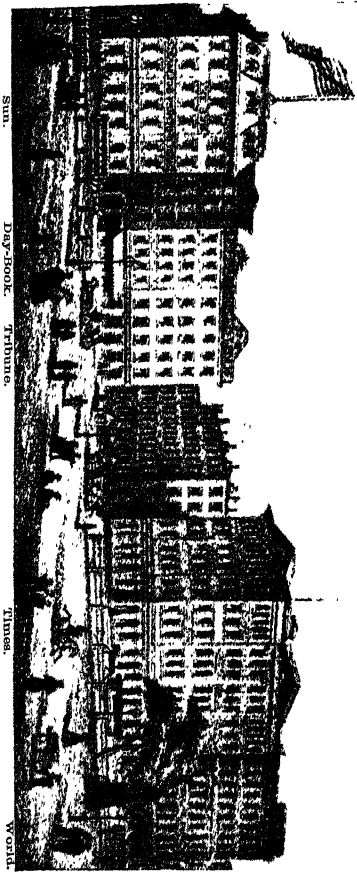
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thereof, the corner-stone of a true, beneficent reconstruction." As to the removal of disabilities in the South, he would deny the right to a voice in the Government to the "implacably hostile," but he would look to the removal of all proscription at the earliest possible moment. He closed thus:

"Men of Virginia: I entreat you to forget the years of slavery and secession and civil war, now happily passed, in the hopeful contemplation of better days of freedom and union and peace now opening before you. Forget that some of you have been masters, others slaves—some for disunion, others against it—and remember only that you are Virginians, and all now and henceforth free-men. Bear in mind that your State is the heart of a great republic, not the frontier of a weaker Confederacy, and that your unequaled combination of soil, timber, minerals, and water-power fairly entitles you to a population of five millions before the close of this century. Consider that the natural highway of empire—the shortest and easiest route from the Atlantic to the heart of the great valley—lies up the James River and down the Kanawha, and that this city, with its mill-power superior to any in our country but that of St. Anthony's Falls on the Mississippi,







Newspaper Row in 1870.

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ought to insure you a speedy development of manufactures surpassing any Lowell or Lawrence, with a population of at least half a million before the close of this century.<sup>1</sup> I exhort you, then, Republicans and Conservatives, whites and blacks, to bury the dead past in mutual and hearty good-will, and in a general, united effort to promote the prosperity and exalt the glory of our long distracted and bleeding, but henceforth reunited, magnificent country."

In May, 1871, Greeley accepted an invitation to address the Texas State Fair at Houston, and made a number of speeches in the South on his way to that city. On his return, a public welcome was given to him by his admirers at the Lincoln Club in New York city, on which occasion he made an elaborate address, urging once more universal amnesty. He said he believed that the leading men of the South would be safer and more useful in Congress than the second-rate men, and that the Republican party would be stronger if the Tombeses, Wises, and Wade Hamptons

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<sup>1</sup> Greeley was not a good prophet. The population of Virginia in 1900 was 1,854,184, and of Richmond 85,050. In his autobiography he said, "I predict that California will have 3,000,000 of people in 1900 and Oregon at least 1,000,000." The population of California in 1900 was 1,485,053, and of Oregon 413,536.

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had been allowed to go to Congress four years before. Admitting that dishonest "carpetbaggers" were "a mournful fact," he explained: "Do not mistake me. *All* the Northern men in the South are not thieves. The larger part of them are honest and good men. . . . The time has been, and still is, when it was perilous to be known as a Republican or an Abolitionist in the South; but it never called the blush of shame to any man's cheek to be called so until those thieving carpetbaggers went there—never! . . . 'Well, then, do you justify the Kuklux?' I am asked. Justify them in what? If they should choose to catch a hundred or two of these thieves, place them tenderly across rails, and bear them quietly and peacefully across the Ohio, I should, of course, condemn the act, as I condemn all acts of violence; but the tears live in a very small onion that would water all my sorrow for them." He closed with a plea for an end of fighting over old issues.

These outspoken expressions made Greeley—leading Republican and editor as he was—the acknowledged representative of the supporters of universal amnesty.

In no border State had the loyal and rebel elements contended more bitterly during the war than in Missouri. When the State Con-

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stitution was revised in 1865, the new instrument disfranchised the sympathizers with the Confederates, and required a rigorous test oath, which was upheld by the United States Supreme Court. In December, 1866, B. Gratz Brown, an ex-United States Senator, took the lead in a movement for universal amnesty and universal suffrage in the State, and he was warmly supported by Carl Schurz,<sup>1</sup> who went to St. Louis in 1867 to edit a German newspaper, and was elected a United States Senator in 1869. The Missouri Legislature of 1870 voted to submit to the people six amendments to the Constitution, which gave the right of suffrage to every male citizen of the United States, and abolished the test oath, and the oath of loyalty required of jurors. The Democrats—a hopeless minority—held no State convention that year. The Republican convention, by a vote of 439 to 342, adopted, instead of the report of the majority of the committee on resolutions (presented by its chairman, Senator Schurz)

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<sup>1</sup> Schurz, who was a vice-president of the National Republican Convention of 1868, moved an amendment to the platform, which was adopted, declaring in favor of "the removal of the disqualifications and restrictions imposed upon the late rebels in the same measure as the spirit of disloyalty will die out, and as may be consistent with the safety of the loyal people."

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which favored the removal of all disqualifications and the conferring of equal political rights and privileges on all classes, a minority report "in favor of reenfranchising those justly disfranchised for participation in the late rebellion as soon as it can be done with safety to the State." Thereupon nearly two hundred and fifty delegates, headed by Schurz, left the convention. The majority adopted a resolution heartily approving the administration of President Grant, and nominated a State ticket. The bolters, with Schurz in the chair, also nominated a State ticket, headed by B. Gratz Brown for Governor. President Grant sided with the Radicals, and in a letter to a Federal office-holder in St. Louis, in September, said, "I regard the movement headed by Carl Schurz, Brown, etc., as similar to the Tennessee and Virginia movements, intended to carry a portion of the Republican party over to the Democracy, and thus give them control."<sup>1</sup> Brown was elected Governor by 41,917 majority.

The Central Committee of the Missouri

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<sup>1</sup> A report, current at the time, and which has found a place in some permanent records, that President Grant refused to receive Senator Schurz when he called at the White House, was without foundation, as I am able to say on the authority of Mr. Schurz himself.

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Liberal Republicans adopted a resolution in 1871 declaring that no citizen should be deprived of a just share in the Government; demanding the removal of all political disabilities; saying that the organization was unequivocally hostile to any tariff which fosters one industry or interest at the expense of another; and calling for a thorough reform of the civil service. The resolution also declared that "this committee, believing that it has no power to disband or consolidate with any other committee, expresses its willingness to call a State convention of Liberal Republicans to take into consideration measures for the unity of the party." As an outcome of this action of the committee a call was issued for a State convention of Liberal Republicans, which was held in Jefferson City on January 24, 1872, with a representation from nearly every county. This convention, in turn, issued a call for a national convention, to be held in Cincinnati, on the first Monday in May next, "to take such action as their convictions of duty and public exigencies may require." The platform adopted declared for universal amnesty and equal suffrage, tariff reform "by the removal of such duties as, in addition to the yielded revenue, increase the price of domestic products

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for the benefit of favored interests," and civil service reform, and denounced the "packing of the Supreme Court to relieve rich corporations," and the attempt to cure the Kuklux disorders, irreligion, or intemperance "by means of unconstitutional laws."

This movement for a national convention received some directions from Washington. Schurz was occupying his seat as Senator at the time, and he held intimate relations with Charles Sumner, whose quarrel with President Grant was a matter of national interest. The unfriendliness of the Massachusetts Senator and the President, beginning, perhaps, when Sumner was obliged, on constitutional grounds, to oppose the confirmation of A. T. Stewart, Grant's first nominee for Secretary of the Treasury, grew into charges and countercharges of great bitterness while the Santo Domingo treaty was under discussion, and the President gave Sumner the chief credit for the defeat of that measure. Motley's recall from England was the President's first act of retaliation. In the following December the President proposed the annexation of Santo Domingo in the same way that Texas had been annexed as a State, and Sumner again led the opposition, selecting words that were especially irritating to

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the executive, and charging him with trying to remove three antitreaty members of the Committee on Foreign Relations. The publication of the Motley correspondence, in January, 1871, put an end to all cooperation between the State Department and the Committee on Foreign Relations. The Alabama High Joint Commission began its sessions in Washington in February, and in March, when the new Congress met, the Senate committee was reorganized, and, in accordance with the President's wishes, Sumner was dropped as chairman.

From that time Sumner was an outspoken opponent of Grant's renomination, and so bitter a critic that he was persuaded by his friends to withhold from publication an arraignment of Grant which he prepared; he circulated it privately, however. Early in 1871 he offered in the Senate a resolution to amend the Federal Constitution so that a President could serve but a single term, and he and others who objected to Grant's reelection discussed the steps necessary to defeat him, and had a share in shaping the Missouri movement. After the nomination of the Greeley ticket, and a few days before Grant's renomination, Sumner made a bitter speech in the Senate, of which he said, as he



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left the Capitol, "I have to-day made the renomination of Grant impossible," and throughout the campaign he refused to believe that the Grant ticket would win.<sup>1</sup>

In 1871 and 1872 the tariff question was causing the Republicans a great deal of anxiety. So firm a defender of protection as Senator Morrill had declared in 1870 that "it is a mistake for the friends of a sound tariff to insist on the extreme rates imposed during the war, if less will raise the necessary revenue." A bill prepared by David A. Wells, Special Commissioner of the Revenue, in 1867, reducing duties on raw material, had passed the Senate by a large majority, and received a vote of 106 to 64 in its favor in the House, but failed there because a two-thirds majority was necessary to reach it under a suspension of the rules. The subject came up again in 1870, when Garfield, in the House, warned his protectionist friends that, unless they revised the tariff "prudently and wisely" they would have to submit to a reduction that would "shock, if not shatter, all our protected industries." Congress in that year passed a tariff bill, but it did not satisfy

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<sup>1</sup> I am assured on the most competent authority that the published statement that Sumner expected that he would be nominated for President at Cincinnati is unfounded.

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the revenue reformers, since, while reducing the duty on pig iron from \$9 to \$7 a ton, it increased the duty on steel rails, nickel, flax, and marble.

The removal of Mr. Wells from his office was accepted as an affront both to tariff reform and to civil service reform. The urgency of the demand for relief from tariff burdens was shown by a letter from a Republican observer in Washington, printed in the Tribune in March, 1871, advocating "a carefully revised tariff bill" so wisely drawn "that it will permit the party to escape a split on this question in the coming presidential campaign." Hubbard, of New Hampshire, on March 27, 1871, moved in the House that the tariff should be so reformed as to be "a tax for revenue only, and not for the protection of class interests at the general expense." A motion to table this resolution was defeated by a vote of 2 yeas to 154 nays, and it was referred to the Ways and Means Committee. The House, at this session, passed a bill placing salt and coal on the free list, and to these, at the instance of the Pennsylvanians, added tea and coffee; but these measures did not pass the Senate.

Thus it will be seen that the tariff declaration of the Missouri Liberal Republicans ap-

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pealed to the sympathies of a large number of other Republicans.

The Tribune of March 30, 1872, published a letter signed by several New York Republicans, addressed to the chairman of the executive committee of the Liberal Republicans of Missouri, expressing their concurrence in the principles set forth by the Jefferson City convention, which, as regards the tariff, they interpreted to mean that "Federal taxes should be imposed for revenue, and should be so adjusted as to make the burden upon the industries of the country as light as possible," hoping that the movement begun there would spread through all the States, and inviting all Republicans of New York who agreed with them to cooperate. Greeley was the second signer of this letter. The Tribune had said, on March 16, "Of course, we shall ask to be counted out [of the Liberal movement] if the majority shall decide to make free trade a plank in their platform," and it explained on April 4, "In signing the letter to Colonel Grosvenor, we simply indicated our approval of the Cincinnati movement, not of every phase embodied in that letter."

The Liberal movement received encouragement in all the States, and on May 1 six

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hundred and fourteen delegates assembled in convention in Cincinnati. Meeting as they did without previous organization, they were largely at sea both as regards the form of the platform and the candidate. Charles Francis Adams was the preference of the radical civil service and tariff reformers. Illinois was divided between Senator Trumbull and Judge David Davis, of the United States Supreme Court.<sup>1</sup> Governor Brown was the favorite of most of the Missouri delegates, and Pennsylvania was ready to vote for Curtin. Horace Greeley was supported by sixty-six of the sixty-eight New York delegates. How to nominate him on a platform in line with the declarations of the Jefferson City platform was a problem even to his friends. The Missourians held that Brown was the logical leader of a movement which, they said, originated in his State and had made him Governor.

In their earlier despatches, as the delegates were gathering, neither the Sun nor the Times correspondent considered Greeley's

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<sup>1</sup> A Labor Reform National Convention, at Columbus, Ohio, on February 21 (twelve States being represented), had nominated Judge Davis for President. He declined the nomination on June 28 on the ground that he had consented to the use of his name in the Liberal Republican Convention.

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nomination a possibility, and both made predictions of the disposition of his vote after the first "complimentary" ballot. E. L. Godkin, in his letter to the Nation reviewing the convention (which he attended), said: "Strange as it may seem, Greeley's nomination was generally regarded as impossible. I think I am right in saying that nobody outside the circle of his immediate supporters treated it as a serious probability. Men laughed when his name was spoken of; all said he ought to have a good complimentary vote; but nearly everybody talked of his selection for the presidency by the convention as an utterly ludicrous thing, which would cover the proceedings with ridicule and contempt. What was feared by the reformers was not this, but some 'sinful game' on the part of the politicians which would defeat Adams and deprive the movement of all weight and significance."

To Adams objection was made that he had not been identified with the Liberal movement; that he was "cold-blooded," and would arouse no enthusiasm in the West, and that his relations with Sumner would drive the latter back to Grant if Adams was nominated. That Adams was not a "practical politician" was shown by the publication, on

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April 25, of a letter addressed by him to David A. Wells, in which he said:

"I do not want the nomination, and could only be induced to consider it by the circumstances under which it might possibly be made. If the call upon me were an unequivocal one, based upon confidence in my character, earned in public life, and a belief that I would carry out in practise the principles that I professed, then indeed would come a test of my courage in an emergency; but if I am to be negotiated for, and have assurances given that I am honest, you will be so kind as to withdraw me out of that crowd. . . . If the good people who meet at Cincinnati sincerely believe that they need such an anomalous being as I am (which I do not), they must express it in a manner to convince me of it, or all their labor will be thrown away."

The Tribune was quick to make use of this letter. Its Cincinnati despatch the next day said that it had created a flutter; "the Missouri and Kansas delegates say it ruins his [Adams's] prospects for the nomination here." Its despatch dated April 26 said that, according to a leading Pennsylvanian, the delegation from that State indicated a willingness to sustain Greeley, "whose presence on the ticket should be a guaranty to the

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country of the dignity and power of the reform movement; he would, they argue, carry an overwhelming Republican vote, and render the work of the Philadelphia gathering [the National Republican Convention] useless. They are equally frank in their repugnance to Charles Francis Adams, whose letter is regarded as frivolous and undignified. He is accused of courting administration bounty by his careless, or as they term it, slighting allusion to the Liberal convention. It is claimed that Adams has lost the chance he had last week, through the earnest sympathy and support extended to him by the World and August Belmont." On April 28 its correspondent telegraphed, "The loudest talking is for Davis, the strongest for Adams, the most boastful for Brown, while the friends of Trumbull and Cox counsel quietly." The next day its advices from the same source were, "There is much talk about Horace Greeley, but his friends are not making any vehement contest for him. Their policy, so far as they can be said to have one, appears to be that of awaiting events; they believe their favorite to be the second choice, in a large measure, of both the Adams and Davis men." Editorially, at the same time, the Tribune said: "The Tribune has no can-

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didate; it asks for no particular man; but it does ask the choice of some man whose name should symbolize the national movement for reform."

The position of Illinois in the convention was an important one. It was represented by forty-two delegates, and the supporters of Trumbull and Davis were stubbornly antagonistic. The anti-Adams feeling among some of these delegates was very strong, and they were quoted as saying, after the publication of his letter to Wells, that Grant would carry their State against Adams by 50,000 majority. As events proved, this feeling caused Adams's defeat.

The convention organized with Senator Schurz in the chair. Two days were devoted to preliminary matters, and on Friday, May 3, the platform was adopted and the balloting for candidates took place. The platform, reported by Horace White, editor of the Chicago Tribune, opened with an address charging the Grant administration with corruption, and the President with using his official position for personal ends, keeping corrupt men in public places, and being unequal to the duties of his office, and declaring that a party "thus led and controlled can no longer be of service to the best interests of the re-



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public." The resolutions demanded the immediate removal of all disabilities imposed for participation in the rebellion, a thorough reform of the civil service, the maintenance of the public credit and a speedy return to specie payments, and opposed further land-grants to railroads. On the question of the tariff it declared as follows:

"Seventh. We demand a system of Federal taxation which shall not unnecessarily interfere with the industries of the people, and which shall provide the means necessary to pay the expenses of the Government, economically administered, the pensions, the interest on the public debt, and a moderate annual reduction of the principal thereof; and, recognizing that there are in our midst honest but irreconcilable differences of opinion with regard to the respective systems of protection and free trade, we remit the discussion of the subject to the people in their Congressional districts, and to the decision of Congress thereon, wholly free from executive interference or dictation."

The delegates were still "at sea" as regards the head of their ticket. On the preceding night the New York Times correspondent, who the day before had insisted

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that Greeley stood no chance of the nomination, reported no change, except that Greeley and Trumbull were "a little stronger"; and the Sun correspondent noted a belief that Adams was the coming man. The most influential Adams men thought that he would be nominated without difficulty.

On Thursday morning it was rumored in convention circles that B. Gratz Brown and Frank Blair were on their way to Cincinnati, and they arrived that evening. It had been stated from the time the delegates began to arrive that Brown would not attend the convention, and different reasons have been assigned for his change of purpose. One writer<sup>1</sup> found his motive in jealousy of the growing influence of Schurz in the Liberal ranks, indicated by the selection of the Missouri Senator for chairman of the convention. But Schurz was already a member of the upper house of Congress, and, as a foreign-born citizen, could not receive the nomination for President. Moreover, Brown could easily have ascertained that Schurz advised against his own selection as chairman, both because he thought he could be more useful on the floor, and because it was his

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<sup>1</sup> Cincinnati correspondence of the Nation of May 9, 1872.

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opinion that a native-born Republican should preside; and that he consented to take the place only when assured that, if he did not, it would go to a man who was radically objectionable to the entire intelligent reform sentiment of the movement. The real explanation of the Blair-Brown scheme in favor of Greeley is rather to be sought in the long-time political enmity of the Blair and Adams families.

When the balloting began, only vague rumors of the Brown program had reached a majority of the delegates, and very many of them were ignorant of the light in which it was regarded by their chairman. The first ballot resulted as follows:

Greeley.....	147	Brown.....	95
Adams.....	205	Curtin.....	62
Trumbull.....	110	Chase.....	24
Davis.....	92½		

This vote aroused the enthusiasm of the Adams supporters, but evidence of the Brown-Greeley deal was supplied at once. As soon as the result was announced the chairman, reading from a slip of paper which he held in his hand, informed the convention that a gentleman who had just received a large number of votes desired to make a communication, and Governor Brown ascended

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the platform. In his remarks he not only stated his own withdrawal, but urged the nomination of Greeley. The Missouri delegation at once retired for consultation, during which Schurz made a vigorous plea against handing over to Greeley their vote. In the first ballot Missouri had given Brown 30 votes and Trumbull 3. In the second ballot it gave Greeley 10, Trumbull 16, and Adams 4. In the fifth ballot it increased the vote for Greeley to 18, giving Trumbull 8 and Adams 4, and the total of this ballot gave Adams 309, and Greeley 258. Adams's supporters now counted on his nomination as a certainty on the next ballot, believing that the Trumbull vote (of 91) would be cast for him.

The Illinois delegates were absent in conference when the sixth ballot was ordered, and the Greeley men began a noisy effort to start a stampede for their favorite. The delegates generally were in a nervous state, not understanding clearly how the wires were being pulled by the skilled manipulators, nor what the wishes of the most trusted leaders were; and had one of the latter taken the floor (as was suggested but not done), and moved the nomination of Adams by acclamation, there is little doubt that the convention

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would have so decreed. The Greeley supporters received unexpected aid when the vote of Illinois was announced, as it gave Greeley 14 and Adams only 27. This marked the beginning of the end. The Greeley hurrah was kept up, votes were changed so rapidly and amid so much confusion that the secretaries could not keep accurate register of them, and the chairman, unable to recognize any one, had to suggest that the changes be handed up in writing. When at last the announcement of the ballot was made, it gave Greeley 482 and Adams 187. Greeley was the nominee of the convention, with Brown for Vice-President. "When the call for a unanimous vote came," said the Tribune's report, "the element known as Free Trade and Revenue Reform manifested a disposition to mar the enthusiasm by dogged silence, and an indignant and unanimous nay."

When the country heard of this result, it taxed public credulity. Greeley's nomination by these tariff reformers and civil service reformers seemed like an impossibility. At the Union League Club in New York city members individually predicted that the candidate would decline the honor, but Greeley had no such intention. How could it seem to him otherwise than that the gratification of

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an ambition unsatisfied for years had come at last? Weed might consider him no politician; Seward might overlook him in the apportionment of nominations and appointments; Lincoln might reject his advice. But now a great movement of the people in favor of that honest government and universal amnesty for which he had so long been pleading, and on account of which he had made so serious sacrifices, had called on him to be its leader. Never satisfied with the position and influence he had gained by means of his editorial pen, he now saw within his reach the great office which would bestow upon him an honor that would gratify his pride, and give him an opportunity to demonstrate those administrative qualities which he had been made to feel that others doubted. During the sessions of the convention he had been occupying a room in a hotel near the Tribune office in order to be in close touch with the convention. When the result of the final ballot was made known to him he received the news with a smiling countenance, and telegraphed at once, instructing his representatives in Cincinnati to tender to the convention his "grateful acknowledgment for the generous confidence" they had shown in him, adding, "I shall endeavor to deserve it."

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But tariff reform! Greeley was ready to accept the platform. To a reporter who asked him that evening, "If the people elect a majority of Congressmen in favor of a repeal of the tariff bill, and Congress repeals that bill, what would be the duty of the next President of the United States?" Greeley replied, "It would be his duty to sign the bill passed by Congress." "If you are elected President," again asked the reporter, "will you sign such a bill if Congress passes it?" Greeley replied, "I certainly will."

Greeley formally accepted the nomination in due order, and, on May 15, printed a card in the Tribune announcing that, from that date, he had "withdrawn absolutely from the conduct of the Tribune and would henceforth, until further notice, exercise no control or supervision over its columns."

Although Greeley and his personal followers did not realize it, the disintegration of the body that nominated him began with the declaration of the final ballot. This was indicated by the press comments. The Nation, which spoke for the supporters of the Liberal movement who considered Adams the type of candidate to represent them, and who could not be allured from revenue and civil

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service reform, repudiated the Cincinnati ticket at once, saying, "The convention has offered us a candidate of undoubted personal honesty, who is, and has long been, associated intimately with the worst set of politicians the State contains—excepting the Tammany ring—whose supporters at the convention included some of the worst political trash to be found anywhere, who would, in all possibility be followed by them to Washington, and who, if left in their hands there, would set up the most corrupt administration ever seen, and that from which least might be expected in the way of administrative reform; who is not more remarkable for his generosity and kindheartedness than for the facility with which he is duped, and not more remarkable for his hatred of knavery than for the difficulty he has in telling whether a man is a knave or not." The New York Evening Post,<sup>1</sup> which would have supported Adams with enthusiasm, rejected Greeley with

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<sup>1</sup> A conference of Republicans opposed to Grant's administration and not satisfied with Greeley was held, at the invitation of Carl Schurz, J. D. Cox, William Cullen Bryant, Oswald Ottendorfer, David A. Wells, and J. Brinkerhoff, at the Fifth Avenue Hotel, in New York, on June 20, and William S. Groesbeck, of Ohio, was nominated for President, and Frederick Law Olmstead for Vice-President. But there the matter ended. Schurz later made speeches for Greeley.



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scorn, Mr. Bryant writing the editorial which stated "Why Mr. Greeley should not be supported for the Presidency," the reasons being his lack of courage, firmness, and consistency; his bad political associations (especially his alliance with Senator Fenton); his want of settled political convictions, except on the subject of the tariff, and "the grossness of his manners."

But to the candidate, and perhaps to his campaign managers, all this objection seemed trivial after his acceptance, on the Cincinnati platform, by the Democratic National Convention on the ninth of July. To one of his associate editors who announced to him his nomination by the Democratic convention he remarked, "I shall carry every Southern State but South Carolina. That they will steal from me."

Naturally, there was considerable apprehension on the part of the Republicans when the campaign opened. If Greeley could poll the Democratic vote, the addition of not a very large number of Republicans would secure for him several important States. In 1872 Maine held her State election in September, and Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana held theirs in October. To these States the whole country looked for the first indication

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of public sentiment on the new alinement. Maine responded with a Republican majority of a little over 17,000. The Tribune, to make the best of this, estimated the reduction of the previous Republican majority in the State by the Liberal movement at 5 per cent, and said, "The lesson, then, of the Maine election is plain. It reveals a percentage of change which, with proper organization and work, gives us Pennsylvania and Indiana in October. After these, the battle wins itself." When, in October, Pennsylvania gave a Republican majority of 40,443, and Ohio a Republican majority of 14,150, while Indiana gave Hendricks, the Democratic-Liberal, 1,148 majority, the Tribune counted 178 electoral votes for Greeley, 119 for Grant, and 69 in doubt, and said, "This leaves us but 6 votes to win from the doubtful States; it leaves Grant 65. On that showing, who can doubt which side the chances lie? Courage, friends. The enemy have done their worst. We have wrested Indiana from their grasp; the way to final victory is clear."

This sort of journalism was more in vogue thirty years ago than it is now, but even then it really deceived no one but Greeley. He, up to the announcement of the result, seemed to have no doubt of his election, and to deem

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himself thousands of votes stronger in these States than were the State candidates. The managers of the Liberal canvass early realized the trend of public opinion, and they decided that Greeley should set out on a speech-making tour. Starting on September 18, he spoke in Pennsylvania and Ohio on his way to Cincinnati, where he made two elaborate addresses. On the return trip he spoke in Kentucky and Indiana, and again in Ohio and Pennsylvania. He presented himself as the champion of universal amnesty, and was cheered and encouraged by the friendly reception which he everywhere received.

The Republican campaign managers, of whom perhaps Senator Roscoe Conkling was the leader, made the attacks on President Grant their keynote, defending the purity of his personal character and motives, and holding up Greeley as weakly inconsistent when seeking the presidency on a platform adopted by revenue reformers, and as the candidate, not only of discontented Republicans, but of his lifelong opponents, the Democrats. In no presidential campaign did the cartoonists ever take so large a part. Greeley was a good subject for their witty pencils, and they dealt him some effective blows; for a really telling cartoon can carry home an ar-

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gument more forcibly and instantly than the most carefully prepared address.

When the November returns came in, Greeley found that he was the most thoroughly beaten candidate, so far as the electoral vote was concerned, who had ever run for President of the United States. Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, Tennessee, and Texas alone gave him their votes. Pennsylvania, which had given the Republican candidate for judge 40,443 majority in October, gave Grant 137,548; Ohio increased her October Republican majority of 14,150 to 37,531; and Indiana changed the small Liberal-Democratic majority to a Republican majority of 22,515. Greeley's own State gave a majority of 53,456 against him, and the majority for Grant in the whole country was 762,991.

Many things contributed to this result. There are prominent participants in the Liberal movement of 1872 still living who think that, if Adams had been the choice of the Cincinnati convention, he would have been elected. Adams would have retained the support of a good many earnest and consistent reformers who could not vote for Greeley, and he would probably have proved less distasteful to Democrats than Greeley was

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found to be. But all such calculations have to reckon with U. S. Grant. Unfortunate as he was in many of the incidents of his first term administration, in the popular eye he was the general whose persistency and faith in the final result—whose generalship—had crushed the rebellion. He might lack experience in choosing civil officers. He might stand up too firmly for his friends. He might give Federal support to unworthy Republicans in the South. He might, in a word, be attacked on this ground and on that. But so had been the early fathers of the republic, whose names were now enshrined in the list of national heroes. To elect Greeley, to elect Adams, it was necessary to defeat Grant, and that was as hard a task in civil as in military movements.

Greeley counted on the support of that large body of men whom he had so long addressed with his pen, and especially of the agricultural classes. But he had been addressing these men in defense of principles which had, for almost twenty years, been identical with the Republican party. The men who admired him as the opponent of slavery extension, as the defender of home productions, as the teacher of temperance, as the spokesman for the farmer, had fol-

## Greeley's Presidential Campaign

lowed his lead for many years as the most influential Republican editor of the country. The war feeling was by no means extinguished. Distrust of the South had not yet disappeared. It was counting on a great uncertainty, therefore, for Greeley to expect to lead out of his old party's ranks, in 1872, the body of Republicans who had taken their political instruction from his pen. The task would have been an easier one before the war. But, while Greeley's electoral vote was small, his popular vote reached 2,834,079, and this was large enough to account for the continued devotion of all his strictly personal following.

The Tribune, on November 7, printed a card from Greeley announcing his resumption of the editorship "which he relinquished on embarking in another line of business six months ago," and saying that it would be his effort to make the paper "a thoroughly independent journal, treating all parties and political movements with judicial fairness and candor, but courting the favor and deprecating the wrath of no one." He would gladly say anything he could to unite the whole people on a platform of universal amnesty and impartial suffrage, but for the present he could do most for that end by silence. As he

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would never again be a candidate for office, he would give more regard to science, industry, and the useful arts, and would "not be provoked to indulgence in those bitter personalities which are the recognized bane of journalism."

This same issue of the Tribune contained a remarkable editorial headed Crumbs of Comfort. In this it was set forth that for twelve years the Tribune had been supposed to keep "for the benefit of the idle and incapable a sort of Federal employment agency. . . . Any man who had ever voted the Republican ticket believed that it was the duty and the privilege of the editor of this paper to get him a place in the custom-house. Every red-nosed politician who had cheated at the caucus and fought at the polls looked to the editor of the Tribune to secure him appointment as gager, or as army chaplain, or as minister to France. . . . It is a source of profound satisfaction to us that office-seekers will keep aloof from a defeated candidate who has not influence enough at Washington or at Albany to get a sweeper appointed under the sergeant-at-arms, or a deputy sub-assistant temporary clerk into the paste-pot section of the folding-room. At last we shall be let alone to mind our own affairs and man-

## Greeley's Presidential Campaign

age our own newspaper, without being called aside every hour to help lazy people whom we don't know, and to spend our strength in efforts that only benefit people who don't deserve assistance. At last we shall keep our office clear of blatherskites and political beggars."

Such a declaration could not fail to give pain to the venerable editor of the Tribune for more reasons than one. It pictured his editorial room as a sort of office-brokerage shop; it offended many of his friends who might consider themselves classed among the "red-nosed"; it counted him out of the list of future political advisers. His action was characteristic. As soon as he read the article he penned the following, and sent it up to the composing-room: "By some unaccountable fatality, an article entitled *Crumbs of Comfort* crept into our last, unseen by the editor, which does him the grossest wrong. It is true that office-seekers used to pester him for recommendations when his friends controlled the custom-house, though the 'red-nosed' variety were seldom found among them; it is not true that he ever obeyed a summons to Washington in order that he might promote or oppose legislation in favor of this or that private scheme. In



## Horace Greeley

short, the article is a monstrous fable, based on some other experience than that of any editor of this journal.”<sup>1</sup> This retraction did not appear in the Tribune. It was so severe a rebuke to the writer and publisher of the *Crumbs of Comfort* that Greeley was urged not to insist on its publication, on the ground that the matter would be soonest forgotten if it was simply dropped. In earlier years he would have asserted his authority and his judgment; now, crushed by his defeat, he yielded.

In the last week of November the country was shocked to hear that Horace Greeley was critically ill, and he died at 6.50 p. m. on November 29, 1872. His wife had been taken to Chappaqua, a helpless invalid, a short time before the date of the election, and he had watched by her bedside day and night. The Tribune in announcing his death said: “His incessant watch around the dying pillow of his wife had well-nigh destroyed the power of sleep. Symptoms of extreme nervous prostration gradually became apparent. His appetite was gone. The stomach rejected food. The free use of his faculties was dis-

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<sup>1</sup> A facsimile of this paragraph was printed in the *New York Boycotter* in November, 1884.



## Horace Greeley

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Statue in Greeley Square.

## His Death

turbed, and he sank with a rapidity that, even to those who watched him closest, seemed startling." In one of Greeley's Letters to a Lady Friend (published in 1893), he wrote, under date of November 8, 1872, "As to my wife's death, I do not count it. Her sufferings since she returned to me were so terrible that I rather felt relieved when she peacefully slept the long sleep. . . . Nor do I care for defeat, however crushing. I dread only the malignity with which I am hounded, and the possibility that it may ruin the Tribune. My enemies mean to kill that; if they would kill me instead I would thank them lovingly. And so many of my old friends hate me for what I have done that life seems hard to bear."

His own words tell the story of his death. "Mr. Greeley," said Dr. Cuyler in his memorial sermon, "died of a broken heart." He had seen the realization of a great ambition within his reach, and had been disappointed. Had he been elected, the campaign criticisms of old friends who had not followed him in his departure from the Republican ranks would have been forgotten in the mapping out of the policy to which he would have devoted himself, and his paper would have had a new status as the organ of the Federal admin-

## Horace Greeley

istration. But, cast down by his defeat—a rejected leader—the personal criticisms were killing, and it was only natural that he, with others, should fear for the future of the journal of his creation, which, he might suppose, must now look to a new constituency for support.

But in his death all the animosities of the recent campaign were forgotten. New York city realized that it had lost its citizen whose renown was widest, and whose fame was most intimately associated with the metropolis, and the whole nation, through press and pulpit, paid tribute to his personal honesty and the purity of his aims. The body lay in state for a day in the City Hall, where it was viewed by more than fifty thousand persons, and among the attendants at the funeral were the President and Vice-President of the United States, Chief Justice Chase, and leading United States Senators. The burial took place in Greenwood Cemetery, Brooklyn. The printers of the United States began at once a movement to erect over his grave a bust of the veteran editor made of melted newspaper type, and such a bust, designed by Charles Calverly, was unveiled there on December 4, 1876. The Common Council of the city, as their tribute, voted to name the

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little triangle at Broadway and Thirty-third Street "Greeley Square," and there a Greeley statue, by Alexander Doyle, was unveiled by the "Horace Greeley Statue Committee" on May 30, 1894.





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